ABOUT QUÉBEC

Guide for my successful integration

Québec

LEARNING ABOUT QUÉBEC

Guide for my successful integration

2 Credits

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Important

The information and references in this guide were current in February 2005. They come from various sources and do not supersede the wording of laws, policy statements or official programs.

Any subsequent changes to the contents will first appear in the electronic version of the guide *Learning about Québec* at www.learningaboutquebec.gouv.qc.ca.

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Aussi disponible en français
Existe una versión en español

3 Personal Information

Family name:

First name:

Address:

Number Street Apartment

City Postal Code

Telephone:

E-mail address:

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7 Welcome to Québec!

By immigrating to Québec, you are carrying out one of the most important projects of your life. There are many challenges in adapting to a new society and taking your place in it. From the moment you arrive in Québec, you will experience many changes and have to try new ways of doing things.

To increase your chances of success, the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC) is pleased to present you with this integration support guide. It outlines the most important steps for your successful integration into Québec society. From now on, it will help you make the transition to your new life in Québec.

Services provided by the MICC and community organizations that help new immigrants

The MICC is one of your primary sources of information. In Québec, Immigration-Québec provides welcoming and integration support services free of charge. Community organizations also help welcome and integrate immigrants. They are very familiar with the needs of newcomers and can provide substantial help. The MICC financially supports these organizations as partners in its activities.

8 *Learning about Québec*: a tool for you

Each newcomer follows a different path towards integration, depending on his or her personal needs and goals. Your guide will help you to assess your needs, set realistic goals and choose effective strategies. It will be very useful in helping you prepare and carry out your immigration plan from the time you obtain your *Certificat de sélection du Québec – CSQ* (Québec Selection Certificate) until you achieve your integration goals in Québec. It will also be valuable during your meetings with MICC welcoming or integration support agents, community organizations providing services to new immigrants, and people who are assisting you in your job search.

How to use your guide

The guide is divided into sections, each covering one or more topics. For each topic, you will find essential information, references to complete your information search, resources to help you take the necessary actions, and sections for personal notes to record your progress.

The steps you take will not necessarily follow the same order as in the guide.

To help you with your planning, each topic is associated with one or two of the following pictograms:

To carry out or start, preferably before leaving for Québec.

To carry out in the first days following your arrival in Québec.

To carry out during the course of your integration in Québec.

Start your steps before leaving for Québec

For most immigrants, there is usually a gap of several months between the time they receive their *Certificat de Sélection du Québec* and their federal immigration visa. You are encouraged to take advantage of this period to start preparing for your new life in Québec.

Use your guide to plan the steps that may be taken before your departure. Not only will you improve your chances for successful integration, but you will also save a great deal of time and energy.

9 Welcoming and integration support services

Learn about the services available and how to obtain them

Entry formalities

Entry formalities upon arrival are fairly short and simple with a valid passport and immigration visa. Canadian authorities are responsible for customs inspection and granting permanent resident status. These procedures can be performed at any Canadian border crossing.

Welcome at the airport and Immigration-Québec Service

If you arrive directly at Montréal-Trudeau airport, proceed to the MICC reception counter located in the international arrivals hall near the baggage claim area. A reception officer will give you useful information and arrange an appointment with the Immigration-Québec Service at your destination for either a welcoming and settlement support interview or an information session explaining the first steps in getting settled.

Go to the MICC reception counter even if you are being met by friends or a family member already living in Québec. A first contact with this service will help you avoid unnecessary steps and facilitate access to government services.

If you are not greeted by this service on arrival, contact the Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence to make an appointment.

Your first meetings with a welcoming or integration support agent will serve to:

- register your arrival by way of your visa, passport and *Certificat de sélection du Québec* and confirm the information in your file (name, date of birth, etc.) if you were unable to do so at the reception counter at the airport;
- help you determine your needs and, where applicable, those of your family, based on your guide;

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> provide you with information on how to obtain important documents (Health Insurance Card, Social Insurance Number, driver's licence, etc.);

> locate other integration services offered by the MICC (information sessions, French courses, *Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec* (comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec), a community organization or government service.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON WELCOMING AND INTEGRATION SUPPORT SERVICES

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*
- **Community organizations that help new immigrants** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*

Notes on my progress

❑ I reported to the MICC reception counter at the airport.

❑ I made an appointment with an Immigration-Québec Service for an interview or an information session explaining the first steps in getting settled.

Contact information:

Appointment date:

❑ I made an appointment with a community organization that helps new immigrants.

Organization name:

Contact information:

Appointment date:

11 Québec society

Understanding the values and foundations of Québec society

To successfully adapt to your new environment requires an understanding of the fundamental values of Québec society.

Québec is a democratic, French-speaking, pluralist society. To adapt to and fully participate in this new environment, you must be prepared to discover and respect the fundamental values expressed in the *Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*. The Charter defines the right to equality, prohibits all forms of discrimination, and specifies the political, judicial, economic and social rights of citizens.

In Québec

> Québec's political system is based on freedom, equality and citizen participation in associations and political parties. Native-born and naturalized citizens, both, elect their representatives at all levels of government in general elections.

> The state is secular. The separation of political and religious powers is a fundamental value of Québec society.

> Québec society favours settling disputes through negotiation. The violent expression of ethnic, political or religious rivalry or hatred is not tolerated.

> All Quebecers, both native-born and immigrants, have the right to freely choose their lifestyle, values, opinions and religion. Everyone has the responsibility to obey all laws, even those that are incompatible with their religion or personal values.

> The Québec government condemns racism and is committed to encouraging the full participation of everyone in the economic, social and cultural development of Québec, regardless of colour, religion, ethnic or national origin. These principles

12 Québec society

are enshrined in the *Declaration by the government of Québec on Ethnic and Race Relations*.

> Men and women are equal; they have the same responsibilities and enjoy the same rights in both public and private life. The law requires parents to provide their children with the security and care necessary for their development. The use of violence against a child, spouse or any other person is prohibited.

> French is more than just an essential communication tool. It is the common symbol of belonging to Québec society and intercultural dialogue.

Before immigrating, learn about the values of Québec society by visiting the suggested websites and reading available documentation. After you arrive in Québec, the Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence or a community organization that helps new immigrants will be able to give you information and refer you to appropriate resources, if needed.

Did you know?

> Québec society today embraces more than 100 cultural communities. With their different languages, cultures and religions, they contribute greatly to the social, economic and cultural enrichment of Québec. They live peacefully and are encouraged to maintain harmonious intercultural relations.

> Québec society favours accommodation, compromise and consensus. Openness to diversity, tolerance and respect are also very important interpersonal values.

> Quebecers prefer a straightforward approach in forming relationships and communicating with each other. They generally communicate in a direct, precise and explicite manner. They usually maintain a certain physical distance between themselves and the person they are speaking to out of respect for the other's personal space. In speaking French with persons younger or of the same age, the familiar "tu" form is widely used.

> Quebecers generally take punctuality very seriously. It is very important to be on time for all appointments.

> While waiting to be served in public, Quebecers generally follow the principle of "first come, first served." Whether it be in a store, a bank, at a bus-stop, or at the theatre, each person awaits his turn. Those who fail to comply risk being called to order by their fellow citizens.

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To learn more

Information on the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, civic relationships and the values and foundations of Québec society

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Québec interculturel*
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*
- **Community organizations that help new immigrants** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*
- **Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse:** www.cdpdj.qc.ca

Information on Québec's cultural communities and intercultural rapprochement

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Québec interculturel*

Information on the rights and living conditions of women and contact information for regional offices

- **Conseil du statut de la femme:** www.csf.gouv.qc.ca

Information on the Québec political system

- **National Assembly of Québec:** www.assnat.qc.ca

Information on your rights and responsibilities, legal publications for the general public, and contact information for organizations

- **Éducaloi:** www.educaloi.qc.ca

Notes on my progress

❑ The following values of Québec society are different from those of my country of origin:

❑ I want to learn more about the following values of Québec society:

Understanding my responsibilities and those of the host society

The government commitment

In conjunction with public, private and community partners, the Québec government provides tools to support and monitor your integration process. It also offers reception and integration services tailored to your needs, including French instruction, consulting in matters pertaining to the recognition of academic and professional qualifications acquired outside Québec, and a number of job integration measures.

My commitment

As an immigrant, you make a commitment to take responsibility for your integration and start the process as soon as possible, using the methods made available to you. You also undertake to learn about and respect the fundamental values of Québec society and its laws.

The success of your integration process will depend on your efforts and your ability to adapt to Québec society. You have an active role to play at each stage of the process. This is your main responsibility.

Overcoming adaptation problems

You may experience problems adapting to a new society with different ways of doing things.

Your difficulties may be related to finding work, financial problems, or the burden of family responsibilities in a new social and cultural setting. In these circumstances, if you begin to isolate yourself, experience anxiety, feel ashamed about not having a job, or lose confidence in yourself, you must talk about it. Don't hesitate to call a trusted friend, family member or someone close to you to find the support and encouragement you need.

Also keep in mind that Québec offers various resources to help you overcome these difficulties. It is common practice in Québec to seek aid outside one's circle of family and friends when necessary. You can consult the host society's resources with complete confidence. If you need this outside support, contact a community organization that helps new immigrants. It will support you throughout your integration process and work with you in identifying the probable causes of your difficulties and adjust your goals as required. When applicable, the organization will refer you to the appropriate resource.

Children might also have adaptation problems, particularly at school. These

problems may manifest themselves as learning difficulties or isolation. To address them, schools offer complementary support, including supervisory, psychological, health and social services. Do not hesitate to use them if needed. Your Centre de santé et de services sociaux – CSSS* (Health and Social Services Centre) can also counsel you. Information on these centres can be found on page 46 of your guide. If your child develops serious behavioural problems, your local youth protection centre can give you help and advice.

To learn more

WELCOMING AND INTEGRATION SUPPORT SERVICES FOR NEW IMMIGRANTS

- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles website: www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *To reach us*
- **Community organizations that help new immigrants** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*

INFORMATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUTH CENTRES IN QUÉBEC

- **Association des centres jeunesse du Québec:** www.acjq.qc.ca

Notes on my progress

❑ Contact person

Name:

Contact information:

Name:

Contact information:

* Also known by its former abbreviation CLSC.

16 Places to settle

Choosing which region or city to live in

Before leaving your country of origin, find out what the different regions of Québec can offer you. Good employment or investment opportunities, an excellent quality of life, affordable living and a variety of services and recreational facilities are available in a number of cities in Québec.

What should I know before leaving for Québec

Since several factors could influence your choice, you should examine different regions in terms of:

- > job opportunities;
- > cost and availability of housing and transportation;
- > access to public transit, educational institutions, recreation and places of worship;
- > cultural and outdoor activities;
- > presence of a community from your country of origin.

To learn more about the regions of Québec

You may request information on Québec's regions by e-mail. A list of e-mail addresses is given on page 132 of your guide. If you do not have Internet access, you can reach an Immigration-Québec Service by mail, telephone or fax. Their addresses and numbers are found on pages 129 and 130 of your guide.

In Québec

If you are in Montréal, attend the information sessions on the different regions of Québec that are given free of charge by Immigration-Québec Services. You will meet resource persons and learn about job vacancies, business prospects, housing opportunities and health and education services as well as French courses available in these regions.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON QUÉBEC'S REGIONS AND MAIN CITIES AND INFORMATION SESSIONS ON THE REGIONS

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*

OTHER SITES TO VISIT TO DISCOVER THE REGIONS AND MAIN CITIES OF QUÉBEC

- **Regional portals:** www.gouv.qc.ca
- **Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions:** www.mamr.gouv.qc.ca
- **Bonjour Québec:** www.bonjourquebec.com

Notes on my progress

❑ I explored opportunities to settle in one of Québec's cities. The cities that interest me most are:

City:

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

City:

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

18 Budget

Planning my budget

There are significant costs to carrying out an immigration plan. Before your departure, it is important to estimate the related costs and provide for an adequate budget. In addition to fees charged by the Québec government to process your application for a *Certificat de sélection du Québec (CSQ)*, you must plan for the costs of completing your immigration steps, getting settled and covering your needs during your first months in Québec.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON THE MINIMUM AMOUNT REQUIRED TO MEET YOUR NEEDS DURING THE FIRST THREE MONTHS IN QUÉBEC

- Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles: www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Why choose Québec*

INFORMATION ON THE PRICES OF DIFFERENT CONSUMER GOODS AND SERVICES

- La toile du Québec: www.toile.qc.ca

Important

If you were selected as a worker, a self-employed worker or an entrepreneur, you made a commitment to have sufficient funds available to meet your needs and those of accompanying family members for the first three months in Québec. Remember that you must have this minimum amount when you arrive.

19 Budget

Main expenses I must consider in planning my budget

Fees after obtaining my *Certificat de sélection du Québec* – CSQ (Québec Selection Certificate)	**Cost**
❑ Fees charged by Canadian authorities to apply for permanent residence	
❑ Fees to translate various documents required for my integration process	
❑ Fees for procedures with the regulatory body governing a trade or profession, where applicable	
❑ Fees to obtain an *Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec* (comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec), where applicable	
❑ Tickets for plane, train, bus, etc.	
❑ Travel insurance	

Expenses upon arrival and during my first months in Québec	
❑ Accommodation during the first days (hotel)	
❑ Renting an apartment	
❑ Furnishing the dwelling (furniture, appliances, bedding, cookware and other essential items)	
❑ Electricity	
❑ Heating (gas, electricity, oil)	
❑ Home insurance	

20 Budget

- ❑ Telephone _____
- ❑ Warm clothing, if I arrive in Québec in the fall or winter _____
- ❑ Transportation (taxi, bus, metro [subway], automobile) _____
- ❑ Health insurance for me and my family (optional – See p. 34 of the guide) _____
- ❑ Food _____
- ❑ Day care, if necessary _____

Other (television, cable, computer, Internet, recreation, etc.) _____

- ❑ _____ _____
- ❑ _____ _____
- ❑ _____ _____
- ❑ _____ _____
- ❑ _____ _____

Total: _____

21 French

Starting to learn French or improving my knowledge

French is the official language of Québec and the language most often used in public life. It is an indispensable tool for participating in cultural, civic and social life, functioning in everyday life, making full use of your job skills and integrating more quickly into the labour market.

Before leaving for Québec

> If you are not francophone, or if you do not have advanced knowledge of French, use the time while waiting for your visa to improve your French-language skills. Focus on developing basic communication skills. Learn to introduce yourself, ask for information or services, describe events, report what someone else said, express your opinion, talk about your work experience, your plans, etc.

> Your efforts to learn French or improve your knowledge will pay off. In fact, many of you will need advanced skills in oral and written French for your successful adaptation and socio-occupational integration in Québec.

> Find out about opportunities to take French courses in the country you are leaving. Québec immigration offices abroad can provide information on organizations or establishments accredited to teach French in your country.

22 French

An essential condition for your social and occupational integration

Knowledge of French is essential for participating in and adapting to Québec society. In your contacts with Quebecers, you will soon notice their openness, kindness and desire to communicate with you in their language. The ability to speak French will help you:

> communicate with Quebecers;

> develop networks of contacts;

> better understand the culture and history of your host society;

> help your children succeed at school.

Adequate knowledge of French will expand your job opportunities and help you in the job search process. For example, you will be able to:

> take part in job search assistance activities offered by employability organizations;

> obtain authorization to work in a regulated trade or profession (permit to practice, certificate of competency or qualification);

> access bridge training;

> pass recruitment examinations;

> find a job.

When you arrive in Québec

French instruction is offered by most universities, general and vocational colleges (CEGEPs) and school boards throughout Québec.

The MICC, in partnership with public educational institutions and community organizations, offers several different and flexible course formats tailored to your profile. Depending on your needs and availability, you can take full- or part-time courses or courses in the workplace.

These courses will also introduce you to the practical aspects of daily life in Québec. Financial support may be available to help you cover the costs.

If you need to start learning French or upgrade your knowledge in Québec, apply for courses within the first days of your arrival. Information on registering for full-time courses can be found on the Immigration-Québec website, along with an *Application for admission to French courses and financial assistance*, which you can fill out and send to the address provided at the end of the form. You can also obtain this kit and information on other formulas for learning French by contacting the Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence.

Different methods

In addition to taking courses, you can improve your French by watching television, listening to the radio, reading publications in French, or taking part in activities with people who speak French. The MICC also provides a free bank of online French exercises. You can also register for distant or online French courses to perfect your knowledge of French. Please note, however, that there may be fees for these courses.

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Full-time and part-time French courses offered by the MICC last 11 weeks and start at fixed dates, generally every three months. You must therefore wait for a new session to start before you can begin a course. You can rarely begin a course immediately after applying.

Québec French

In your first contacts with Quebecers, you may need to make an effort to adapt to a type of French or a vocabulary that is unfamiliar to you. However, you will get used to it without too much difficulty.

To learn more

ORGANIZATIONS OR INSTITUTIONS OFFERING FRENCH COURSES IN THE COUNTRY YOU ARE LEAVING

- **Québec Immigration Office abroad covering your territory** – contact information available on the site of the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles: www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *To reach us*

ORGANIZATIONS OR INSTITUTIONS OFFERING FRENCH COURSES IN QUÉBEC (ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS, REGISTRATION, LENGTH OF COURSES, TEACHING TOOLS, LOCATION, SCHEDULE, FINANCIAL AID, ETC.)

- **Website of Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles**
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*

ONLINE TRAINING – EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, RESOURCES AND COURSES OFFERED, REGISTRATION FEES

- **Télé-université**: www.teluq.uquebec.ca
- **Le-Formateur/Portal for online training** (computers and languages) given by 16 CEGEPs in Québec: www.le-formateur.com
- **Du français sans faute**: www.dfsf.com

FREE FRENCH EXERCISES ON THE MICC WEBSITE

- www.micc-francisation.gouv.qc.ca

24 French

Notes on my progress

Before leaving for Québec

❑ I found out which organizations and educational institutions offer French courses.

❑ I am taking a French course.

Name of the organization or institution:

Address:

Training begins on the following date:

On arrival in Québec

❑ I applied for admission to a French course.

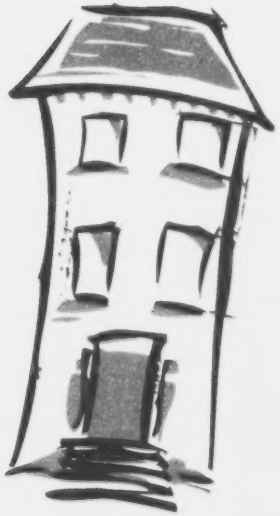
Registration date:

Name of the organization or institution:

Address:

Training begins on the following date:

25 Housing



Learning about housing

Rental accommodation has been scarce in several Québec cities in recent years. This greatly complicates the search for an apartment. You will need to be patient, since finding the right apartment takes time and effort. You may have to live temporarily in a dwelling that does not fully meet your expectations.

The cost of an apartment varies according to, among other things, the number of rooms it contains, the city or neighbourhood where it is located, supply and demand, and its proximity to services. Housing is generally cheaper outside of large cities. Before deciding where to settle, evaluate the advantages available in different regions across Québec.

Did you know?

Like most urban Quebecers, most new immigrants are tenants. In Québec, the rental contract (called a "lease") usually expires on June 30 of each year, so the best time to look for an apartment is in March, April and May. However, a lease can be signed at any time of the year and for any length of time.

Page 103 of your guide gives additional information on housing in Québec.

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Apartment terms

In Québec, if it says:	... it means:
2 ½, 3 ½, 4 ½, etc.	the number of rooms in the apartment (the ½ refers to the bathroom).
Semi-furnished	basic appliances (stove and fridge) are provided and included in the rent.
Heated or unheated	whether or not the cost of heating is included in the rent.
Hot water	the cost of energy for hot water is included in the rent.

Québec housing standards generally provide for one room per person, excluding the kitchen and bathroom. However, as there is no specific legislation on this point, you should evaluate the amount of the rent based on the space observed during your visit, regardless of how the landlord calculates the number of rooms.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON AVERAGE RENT AND AVAILABILITY OF APARTMENTS IN DIFFERENT REGIONS OF QUÉBEC

- **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation:** www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca
- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Why choose Québec*

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Notes on my progress

❑ I have identified the apartment features that I am looking for.

Number of rooms:

Appliances: ❑ to be provided ❑ included

Proximity to public transit: ❑ metro (subway) ❑ bus ❑ suburban train

28 Housing

Finding my first place to live

When you arrive in Québec, unless you have significant financial means, you will probably not plan to stay in a hotel for very long. Your first priority will therefore be to find suitable lodging at an affordable price.

Lodging upon arrival

Initially, you would do well to temporarily rent furnished accommodation (an apartment or room) by the week or month. If possible, it should be centrally located to make your first steps easier. You might consider living with relatives or friends for a while. After a few weeks or months, you can look for housing better suited to your needs.

Looking for my first home

Before choosing a place to live, you should estimate the maximum rent that you can reasonably afford on top of your current expenses. When calculating the cost of apartment rental, take into account the cost of essential services (electricity, heat, insurance, telephone, transit) and other services such as cable TV and parking. Some apartments are equipped with a refrigerator and stove, but you must usually provide your own appliances.

Take the time to explore the surroundings and neighbourhoods of the city where you chose to live. After deciding on a neighbourhood or municipality that you like, walk along residential streets looking for vacant apartments indicated by an "À louer – For rent" sign. You can also check the classified ad sections in newspapers and visit websites to find an apartment.

Useful tip

Ask staff at the Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence which community organization can help you find an apartment and use the services of this organization.

How to choose an apartment

- Visit apartments that you find most attractive, accompanied by another person if possible.
- Inspect the condition of the premises and ask to see all rooms of the apartment.
- Evaluate what repairs are needed and check that at least one telephone jack is working.
- Find out what services (heat, electricity, painting, plumbing maintenance, etc.), furniture and appliances are included in the rent, and ask about caretaker services and

regulations regarding the enjoyment, use and upkeep of the apartments and common spaces.

> Look at the dwelling in terms of safety, noise level and proximity to services like supermarkets, public transit, schools, etc.

> If you have any pets, make sure they are not prohibited by any building regulation or clause in the lease.

Useful tips

Carefully read the entire lease before signing it. Make sure that all conditions discussed with the landlord are included in writing, particularly those concerning repairs the landlord promised to make and the date for completing them. Also make sure that the dwelling indicated in the lease is really the one you visited and agreed to rent.

Useful information

– Some neighbourhoods have a tenants' association, often called a "housing committee," which can help you with all aspects of renting an apartment.

– In Québec, the rental agreement normally takes the form of a written contract in prescribed form called the "lease," which both parties must sign and respect. This is an important formality since it is a true contract defining the respective responsibilities and commitments of the landlord and tenant. The Régie du logement du Québec (Rental Board) provides an official lease form widely used by apartment owners.

Page 103 of your guide contains additional information on leases.

To learn more

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE TO HELP YOU FIND A PLACE TO LIVE

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Housing*
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*
- **Community organizations that help new immigrants** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*

INFORMATION ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LANDLORDS AND TENANTS WITH RESPECT TO APARTMENTS RENTAL, MAIN FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHILE LOOKING FOR AN APARTMENT, PRACTICES PROHIBITED BY LAW, THE LEASE, CO-LEASING, YOUR RECOURSE IF THE LANDLORD FAILS TO RESPECT THE LEASE

- **Régie du logement du Québec:** www.rdl.gouv.qc.ca
- **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation:** www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

INFORMATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND YOUTH RIGHTS

- **Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse:** www.cdpdj.qc.ca

Notes on my progress

❑ Neighbourhoods where I wish to look for an apartment:

❑ Amount that I can spend on rent:

❑ Contact information and main features of apartments that I want to visit:

Address	Number of rooms	Heated or unheated	Proximity to public transit	Proximity to other services (schools, day care, medical clinic, etc.)	Cost

❑ I need help looking for an apartment. I was referred to a community organization that helps new immigrants.

Community organization name:

Name of contact person:

Contact information:

32 Important documents

Gathering important documents

Bring all documents that will be useful during your first steps towards getting settled. You will need them to obtain a Social Insurance Number, Health Insurance Card and driver's licence, as well as to register your children in school, obtain recognition of your educational and professional qualifications, search for a job, open a bank account, apply for a mortgage, etc.

A checklist of the documents that you and your family members must bring to Québec follows. The list will vary depending on each individual situation.

- ❑ *Certificat de sélection du Québec – CSQ* (Québec Selection Certificate)
- ❑ A valid permanent resident visa affixed to your passport (issued by Canadian authorities)
- ❑ Confirmation of permanent resident status (issued by Canadian authorities)
- ❑ Valid passport and other travel documents
- ❑ Other identity papers

- ❑ Act of birth, birth certificate, adoption papers
- ❑ Marriage contract, marriage certificate or contract of common-law relationship
- ❑ Civil union contract or certificate
- ❑ Separation or divorce papers
- ❑ Family records, medical and dental records, vaccination booklet
- ❑ Proof of coverage by the social security plan of your country of origin, where applicable

33 Important documents

- ❑ Diplomas, certificates and other attestations of education
- ❑ Academic transcripts
- ❑ Description of courses and internships completed, including the duration of each
- ❑ Attestation of continuing education
- ❑ *Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec* (comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec), where applicable (issued by the MICC)
- ❑ Proof of employment and work experience
- ❑ Proof of training internship or upgrading activities
- ❑ Reference letters from previous and current employers with information on their company's operations
- ❑ Permit to practice a trade or profession
- ❑ Certificate of occupational competency or qualification
- ❑ Credit history, bank references, bank statements, statements of personal or mortgage loans, bank cards
- ❑ Reference letters from former landlords or property title certificates
- ❑ Valid driver's licence, international driver's licence

All documents must be originals or certified true copies. If the original documents are in a language other than French or English, you must provide an official translation (by a certified translator, consulate, embassy) or one that has been authenticated by official authorities. The translation must accompany the original documents. Your documents should be translated into French as much as possible, but English translations are usually accepted if you already have them.

Useful tips

- Make sure that the information respecting you and your family members is correct on the confirmation of permanent resident status and the *Certificat de sélection du Québec*. On each document, carefully check the spelling of family and given names and the accuracy of birth dates.
- If possible, bring cash in Canadian funds with you.

Notes on my progress

- ❑ I have the originals and certified true copies of all documents to bring with me.
- ❑ I obtained official translations of all documents where necessary.

Obtaining essential and useful documents

Once in Québec, you should quickly obtain the various documents that will allow you to access government services and make your integration process easier. We recommend that you apply for them within the first days of your arrival. Correctly fill out the required forms and send them in as soon as possible. Do not hesitate to request help from the Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence or a community organization that helps new immigrants.

Health Insurance Card

The Health Insurance Card allows you to receive health care – medical services and hospitalization – covered by the Québec Health Insurance Plan. Persons settling in Québec can benefit from the Health Insurance Plan after a waiting period of a maximum of three months after they register with the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ). There are exemptions to the waiting period. The RAMQ will tell you if an exemption applies to you or a family member. Individuals subject to the waiting period must pay for their own health services during this period or else buy private insurance.

Pre-registration is the first step in obtaining your Health Insurance Card. Call or visit an RAMQ office without delay to provide the information required for your registration. Depending on the situation, the RAMQ will give you or send you a registration form. Fill it out, making sure that all the information is correct, sign it and enclose the required documents. Persons aged 14 and over must have their application authenticated. The RAMQ will tell you what procedure to follow. It will send you a letter indicating the date on which you become eligible for the plan, and then send your Health Insurance Card. Don't forget to notify the RAMQ of any change of address.

Each family member must have his or her own Health Insurance Card. Always keep your Health Insurance Card with you and never lend it to anyone.

Additional information on the Health Insurance Plan and Card can be found on page 109 of your guide.

35 Important documents

Don't delay!

- Contact the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec in the first days following your arrival so as not to delay your eligibility for the plan.
- If you are buying private insurance, do so within five days of your arrival in Québec. After this period, it will become more difficult to get insurance. For more information, contact the Canadian Life and Health Insurance OmbudService.

To learn more

Information on government health and social services

- **Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux:** www.msss.gouv.qc.ca
  Consult the guide *At your service! Health*.

Information on the Health Insurance Plan and Card

- **Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec:** www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca

Information on private insurers

- **Canadian Life and Health Insurance OmbudService:** www.scapc.ca

Notes on my progress

❑ I contacted the RAMQ on my arrival to pre-register myself and my child or children, where applicable.

Date:

❑ I completed my registration and that of my child or children, where applicable.

Date:

❑ I purchased private insurance, should I need it.

Date:

❑ I received my Health Insurance Card and that of my child or children.

Date:

Social Insurance Number

The Social Insurance Number (SIN) is essential in many circumstances, particularly in dealing with employers, government agencies and financial institutions. You should apply for one within the first days of your arrival in Québec.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) officials will give you a SIN application form on your arrival. It is also available at Service Canada Centers and Immigration-Québec Services, as well as on the website of Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC).

To obtain your SIN, complete the Social Insurance Number application form. Don't forget to write on your form the postal address where the plasticized card with your Social Insurance Number can be mailed to you in the next few weeks. Bring this form and your identity documents to the Service Canada Centre serving the area of your place of residence. This is the quickest, most efficient and most secure way of obtaining a SIN, since you are never separated from your identity papers. You can also apply by mail, but this method is riskier since you must enclose your original identity papers.

Important

Your Social Insurance Card is an important document. Keep it in a safe place. By law, only your employer has a right to SEE your card.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON THE SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER AND HOW TO OBTAIN YOUR CARD

- **Human Resources and Social Development Canada:**
  www.hrsdc.gc.ca
  Clic on *Frequently asked questions*, then on *Social Insurance Number*.

Notes on my progress

❑ I filled out my application.
Date:

❑ I received my Social Insurance Card.
Date:

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Permanent Resident Card

New immigrants are automatically issued a Permanent Resident Card by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) as part of the immigration process.

This card confirms that its bearer has permanent resident status. If you travel outside Canada, you will need your Permanent Resident Card to re-enter the country on any commercial carrier (airplane, boat, train or bus). You must present your card and that of your children, if any, to staff of the carrier.

The card will be usually mailed to you within four weeks after you entered Canada or from the time that you gave CIC your mailing address in Canada.

If you already know your mailing address when you land in Québec, give it to CIC during procedures for granting you permanent resident status. If you cannot give your mailing address at this time, you must do so within 180 days after your arrival. You may fax it (the number will be given to you at the CIC office when you arrive), phone the Call Centre, or use the Internet. Make sure that the address you provide is valid for at least 30 days.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON THE PERMANENT RESIDENT CARD

- **Citizenship and Immigration Canada:** www.cic.gc.ca
  - To send your address by Internet, click on *On-line Services*, then on *Address notification*.
  - To obtain the Call Centre number, click on *Permanent Resident Card Information*, then on *PR Card Call Centre*.

Notes on my progress

❑ I gave the postal address where I will receive my Permanent Resident Card.

❑ I received my Permanent Resident Card and that of my child or children.

Driver's licence

To drive a vehicle on Québec roads, you must have a driver's licence of the appropriate class. If you have a valid driver's license issued outside Québec, you may drive an automobile up to 90 days after settling in Québec without a Québec licence. After this period, you must have a Québec driver's licence. If you do not have a licence and want one, you must first obtain a learner's permit and then complete a learning period. The Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) will tell you what steps to take.

Exchange of passenger car driver's licence

The conditions for exchanging a driver's licence vary according to the country where you obtained your licence. If your driver's licence was issued by a country with standards equivalent to those of Québec, it may be exchanged for an equivalent Québec licence with no examination.* These countries are listed on the SAAQ website.

If you hold a driver's licence issued by another country at least one year prior to your arrival in Québec, you can obtain a Québec licence provided you pass theory and practical (driving) tests.

If you want to exchange your licence, contact the SAAQ in the first days after you arrive in Québec. Depending on your situation, it may take several weeks from the time you apply until the exchange takes place.

Other vehicles

If you want a permit to drive another type of vehicle (a heavy vehicle, for example), you must first obtain a Québec licence to drive an automobile. SAAQ customer information will tell you how to proceed. You may also visit the SAAQ website.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON THE DRIVER'S LICENCE AND THE QUÉBEC'S PUBLIC AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE PLAN

- **Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec:** www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca
  For general information, telephone numbers and a list of service points, click on *To Reach Us*.

* Changes have been made to the Highway Safety Code. For information, contact the SAAQ.

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Notes on my progress

❑ I made an appointment with an SAAQ service centre.
Address:

Date of appointment:

❑ I must take the knowledge test.
Address:

Date of appointment:
Cost:

❑ I must take the road test.
Address:

Date of appointment:
Cost:

❑ I obtained my driver's licence.
Date:
Cost:

40 Government services

Learning about government programs and services and applying for them if needed

During your first weeks in Québec, you will have many steps to take to obtain the services that you and your family need.

Before leaving for Québec, find out what services and programs might be most useful to you. When you arrive in Québec, a welcoming agent from the Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence will tell you how to apply for these services. If necessary, he or she will refer you to a community organization that helps new immigrants to assist you in this process.

Act quickly so as not to delay your eligibility for different services.

Financial assistance for the family

Various financial aid programs are available to help parents meet their family responsibilities:

- > child support;
- > reduced contribution program for day care places;
- > Canada Child Tax Benefit;
- > maternity and/or parental benefits.

Eligibility for these programs generally depends on family income, number and age of children, personal or family circumstances and other criteria. To find out if you qualify, contact the appropriate organization.

For information on all family assistance programs, visit the website of the Ministère de la Famille, des Aînés et de la Condition féminine. An application for the Canada Child Tax Benefit can be found on the Canada Revenue Agency website.

Additional information on the family can be found on page 112 of your guide.

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To learn more

INFORMATION ON ALLOWANCES, BENEFITS AND OTHER FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

- **Ministère de la Famille, des Aînés et de la Condition féminine:** www.mfacf.gouv.qc.ca, link *Family and childcare services*

APPLICATION FOR THE CANADA CHILD TAX BENEFIT

- **Canada Revenue Agency:** www.cra-arc.gc.ca, link *Child and Family Benefits*

INFORMATION ON QUÉBEC PARENTAL INSURANCE PLAN

- **Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale:** www.mess.gouv.qc.ca

INFORMATION ON THE CHILD ASSISTANCE PAYMENT AND ON THE SUPPLEMENT FOR HANDICAPED CHILDREN

- **Régie des rentes du Québec:** www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca

Notes on my progress

❑ I took steps to find out whether I was eligible for the programs.

Program:

Date of eligibility application:

Program:

Date of eligibility application:

Program:

Date of eligibility application:

Program:

Date of eligibility application:

Day care services

Childcare services

In Québec, it is forbidden to leave children under age 12 unattended. However, parents who work or study sometimes find it difficult to handle both work and family life. To help these parents balance family and job responsibilities, the Québec government established a network of various day care services, including childcare centres and day care centres.

However, demand is very high and waiting lists are accordingly long. It sometimes takes a year or two to secure a place in one of these services. If you want to register your child in a childcare centre, do it within the first days of your arrival to Québec.

The majority of regulated day care services offer places in return for a reduced contribution. Certain families may be reimbursed a portion of their day care fees or be totally exempt. To learn more, contact the day care service of your choice or the Ministère de la Famille, des Aînés et de la Condition féminine.

Additional information on childcare services can be found on page 113 of your guide.

Day care services in schools

The schedules of preschool and primary school pupils rarely coincide with those of working parents. Moreover, school holidays such as professional days often fall on working days. Most schools provide day care facilities to take care of children before classes start in the morning, at noon and after class. Pupils who use these services after class can use the time to do their homework and learn their lessons. Contact your child's school or your school board to learn which schools provide these services.

Useful tip

Before choosing a day care service, visit it and meet the staff.

To learn more

QUÉBEC FAMILY POLICY AND DAY CARE SERVICES

- **Ministère de la Famille, des Aînés et de la Condition féminine:** www.mfacf.gouv.qc.ca, link *Family and childcare services*
- **Association québécoise des centres de la petite enfance:** www.aqcpe.com
- **Association des haltes-garderies communautaires du Québec:** www.ahgcq.org

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Notes on my progress

❑ I registered my child or children in day care.

Child's name:
Name of day care centre:
Address:

Telephone number:
Registration date:

Child's name:
Name of day care centre:
Address:

Telephone number:
Registration date:

Educational services

The Québec school system is comprised of a public education network extending from preschool education (kindergarten) up to university education. The Québec public school system is language-based – French and English – according to the language of instruction used in the schools. The majority of establishments teach in French.

Additional information on the Québec education system can be found on page 119 of your guide.

Measures to support French learning

Since the official language of Québec is French, all students, with the exception of children belonging to Québec's anglophone minority, must normally attend a school under the French-language school board in their region up to the end of high school, regardless of their mother tongue.

If your children do not speak French, they will have difficulty taking courses given in French. To address this, non-francophone students at the preschool, primary and secondary levels can take advantage of French learning support measures offered by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS). By teaching them the language of instruction, these measures help pupils integrate as quickly as possible in an ordinary class where French is used. The measures may vary from one school to another, but each must offer students the most appropriate support.

Parent participation at school

Like most parents, you will want to follow your children's progress in school. Since school authorities encourage this practice, you will be invited to the school regularly to:

- meet the teachers;
- learn about school programs;
- participate in festivities organized by the students.

These meetings will give you a chance to express your needs to the people taking care of your children, learn about your children's progress and difficulties, and meet other parents.

Useful tips

- By maintaining close and regular contact with your child's school, you will become more familiar with its resources and be able to call upon the services of its professionals when necessary.
- By participating in activities at your child's school and talking with his or her friends and other parents, you will get to know your neighbours, establish contacts and become integrated in the life of your neighbourhood.

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To learn more

INFORMATION ON THE QUÉBEC EDUCATION SYSTEM AND TEACHING INSTITUTIONS

- **Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport:** www.mels.gouv.qc.ca

Notes on my progress

❑ I registered my child or children in school.

Child's name:
Name of school:
Address:

Telephone number:
Registration date:

Child's name:
Name of school:
Address:

Telephone number:
Registration date:

Child's name:
Name of school:
Address:

Telephone number:
Registration date:

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Health and social services

Medical treatment is available in doctor's offices, private clinics, hospitals, and some Centres de santé et de services sociaux – CSSS* (health and social services centres). Always bring your Health Insurance Card or your child's card with you when you go to the doctor, clinic, hospital or CSSS.

Health and social services centres

A CSSS offers basic medical treatment and psychosocial services, with or without an appointment, to all segments of the population (children, youth, adults and the elderly). If you are concerned about your health or that of a family member or close friend, call the CSSS Info-santé line. Qualified nurses will give you advice or refer you to appropriate resources. This free telephone service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The phone number of your neighbourhood CSSS can be found in the telephone directory.

CSSS services are generally free, even during the waiting period for your Health Insurance Card. However, you must have the Health Insurance Card to obtain medical treatment except in certain exceptional cases. The CSSS provides a variety of services such as sample taking, vaccinations, etc.

Useful tips

- Visit your local CSSS to learn what services it offers. If it cannot provide the help you need, its staff will refer you to the appropriate organization. Some CSSSs offer help in several languages.
- Check the CSSS opening hours before visiting outside regular working hours or on weekends.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

- **Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux:** www.msss.gouv.qc.ca
  You can also consult the guide *At your service! Health.*

Notes on my progress

❑ My neighbourhood CSSS:

Telephone number:

Address:

* Also known by their former abbreviation CLSC.

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Municipal services

Everywhere in Québec, municipalities are at the heart of community life. Thus, in addition to providing residents with public facilities such as sports centres, playgrounds, libraries, cultural centres, etc., they organize activity programs that vary with the seasons.

Public libraries are an attractive resource that you can use free of charge to read newspapers. You can also consult the Internet and borrow books and other documents, as well as toys, CDs, electronic games, etc. You may have to pay for these services or become a library member.

Municipalities also provide a variety of other services including public transit and public security. Ask your municipality what services are offered and how to use them. You can visit your municipality's website, telephone or go in person to the information office during business hours.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON MUNICIPAL SERVICES

- **Regional portals:** http://www.gouv.qc.ca
- **Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions:** www.mamr.gouv.qc.ca
- **Bonjour Québec:** www.bonjourquebec.com

Government employment services

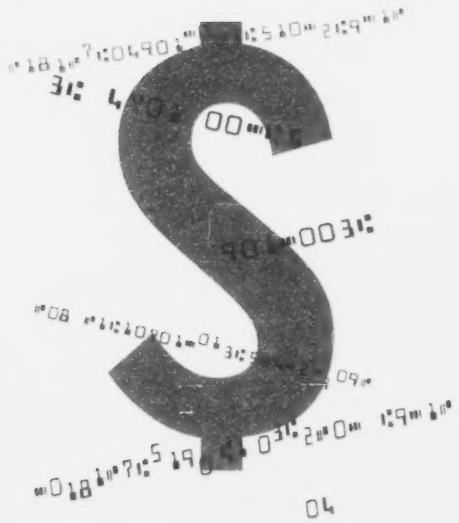
Government employment services are the responsibility of Emploi-Québec.

Page 57 of your guide gives a description of these services along with available information sources.

Notes on my progress

❑ I learned what services are offered by the municipality.

48 Banking services



You will definitely need a bank account for your day-to-day transactions. Find out about the different services provided by banks, credit unions (*caisses populaires*) and trust companies. Then decide which one offers an account that best suits your needs, pays the highest interest rate and charges the lowest service fees.

Before closing the bank account that you have in your country, wait until you are settled in Québec since the opening of new account in Québec may take some time.

Opening my bank account

To open a bank account, simply visit the branch of your choice. You will usually be asked to provide two documents proving your identity. In some cases, the institutions will also accept sponsorship by a customer they know. You can open a personal account even if you do not have a job. Moreover, you are not obliged to deposit money in a new account. All financial institutions offer a range of useful services such as foreign currency exchange, money transfers and safety deposit boxes.

Obtaining my bank debit card

Banking services are becoming increasingly automated. Automatic teller machines can be found in most banks, credit unions and other public places such as *dépanneurs* (convenience stores) and shopping centres. These automated services allow you to perform most of your routine bank transactions (deposits, withdrawals, transfers, utility bill payment) at any time using a magnetic card called a "bank debit card." You can also use it to pay for purchases at most supermarkets, gas stations, pharmacies and other stores. The amount of your purchase is deducted directly from your account.

To obtain a bank debit card, simply ask for one. Before using your card, ask your bank or credit union what conditions apply. Service fees may be added to each transaction.

Learning about credit

Several forms of credit are available in Québec. They include credit cards, instalment purchase plans offered by stores and bank lines of credit.

With credit so easily available, you must be extremely careful. You can buy all sorts of things immediately, but very high interest rates make credit expensive. Before buying a major item on credit, make sure you can meet the required monthly payments without difficulty. Keep your other financial obligations in mind when making your calculations.

Credit cards

Financial institutions, major stores, oil companies and other merchants offer a wide variety of credit cards. They often use very persuasive advertising and throw in gifts, bonus points and other incentives to recruit customers and keep them loyal. Examine your needs carefully before accepting a credit card and remember that it cannot be issued without your written consent.

A financial institution may also offer you a second credit card to be used by another person. Your written consent is required, but you will be fully responsible for charges on this card, regardless of the user. If you use your credit card to make purchases by mail, phone or over the Internet, first make sure that the merchant is trustworthy and the transaction is secure.

Useful tips

- Consumer associations and Option consommateurs can inform you about your rights when you open an account in a financial institution and can guide you through the process. They can also help you balance your personal or family budget.
- Keep your credit cards and bank debit cards in a safe place and never reveal your Personal Identification Number (PIN).
- If one of your cards is lost or stolen, notify the issuing institution immediately.

Banking services

To learn more

INFORMATION ON BANKING SERVICES: OPENING AN ACCOUNT IN A FINANCIAL INSTITUTION, CREDIT, CARDS, INTEREST RATES

- **Canadian Banker Association:** www.cba.ca
- **Option consommateurs:** www.option-consommateurs.org

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR CONSUMER ASSOCIATIONS IN THE REGIONS

- **Réseau de protection du consommateur du Québec:** www.consommateur.qc.ca

CONSUMER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

- **Office de la protection du consommateur:** www.opc.gouv.qc.ca

Notes on my progress

❑ I opened a bank account.

Institution:

Date:

❑ I obtained a bank debit card.

Date:

❑ I learned about credit.

51 Network of contacts

Developing my network of contacts

You can start building your network of contacts before leaving by talking about your plan to settle in Québec with friends and acquaintances who already live there. Another method is to join virtual communities through Internet chat rooms. Taking part in them can help you create a mutual help network.

Developing a network of contacts is a normal part of the integration process for anyone in new surroundings. Although this approach takes patience and determination, your network will be a great advantage in helping you get settled and adapt to your new life in Québec. It could include an immigrant who is having similar problems, a member of your community who has already experienced the immigration process, or someone in the host society with whom you have an affinity. They can all give you support and encouragement in the various steps you will have to take.

There are different ways to build a network in Québec. For example, you may:

- take part in neighbourhood life by signing up for leisure, sports, social, cultural or community activities;
- do volunteer work;
- attend parent meetings at the day care centre or school;
- take French courses or other courses and attend information seminars given by the MICC.

Useful tip

By integrating into francophone Québec society you will increase your chances of making contacts that could lead to a job.

52 Network of contacts

One effective way to find a job is through networking. For a person seeking work, networking is defined as resorting to one's network of acquaintances as a source of information and support. You can use your personal network – family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances – or your community network – school committees, volunteer activities and associations. Include as many people as possible, since they also have networks of contacts and could know about job opportunities and provide you with references. They may also have ties with certain employers and could offer to send them your curriculum vitæ.

Networking is an excellent strategy for learning about the hidden job market. However, many people hesitate to use it for fear of imposing on people or asking for help. It also takes time and effort. Don't hesitate to talk about your work experience and mention specifically what type of job you want.

Employment fairs are excellent opportunities to meet employers, get information on jobs, and leave your curriculum vitae with companies that interest you.

Hidden jobs

About 80% of jobs are not advertised in newspapers or on the Internet. Recruitment for these positions is done by word of mouth.

Volunteer work

Volunteerism is voluntary unpaid work to improve the quality of life and well-being of fellow citizens. As a volunteer, you can choose which field you wish to work in, and decide how much time you will devote to the activity. Volunteer work can help you build your network of contacts while learning about and adapting to your new society.

If possible, do volunteer work in your own occupational field. By doing so, you will become known in a work environment that interests you and learn about job opportunities. Employers may recognize volunteer work as valuable experience.

Useful tip

Visit the website of the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome. It contains useful information on volunteer work in Québec, including Québec's legislation on individual rights and responsibilities and legislation that determines the rules of conduct of different organizations where you can do volunteer work.

53 Network of contacts

The Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence, or a community organization that helps new immigrants, will tell you about other opportunities to develop your network and refer you to appropriate resources as needed. Do not hesitate to use their services.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON THE FEATURES AND ADVANTAGES OF NETWORKING AND HOW TO CREATE, BUILD AND MAINTAIN A NETWORK OF CONTACTS

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*
- **Community organizations that help new immigrants** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*

INFORMATION ON VOLUNTEER WORK AND DIRECTORY OF AGENCIES WHERE YOU CAN DO VOLUNTEER WORK (ORGANIZED BY SUBJECT AND BY REGION)

- **Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome:** www.benevolat.gouv.qc.ca
- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*
- **Community organizations that help new immigrants** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*

Network of contacts

Notes on my progress

❑ I choose the following ways to start building my network of contacts:

Activity:
Contact person:
Contact information:

Activity:
Contact person:
Contact information:

❑ I am interested in the following volunteer areas:

❑ I wish to contact the following volunteer organizations:

Organization name:
Contact person:
Contact information:

Organization name:
Contact person:
Contact information:

55 Network of contacts

- ❑ I talk about my job search plans with my family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances.
- ❑ I talk about my job search plans with persons I meet in the course of my different activities.
- ❑ I wish to visit the following job fairs:

  Name of event:
  Date:
  Place:
  Contact information:

  Name of event:
  Date:
  Place:
  Contact information:

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Seeking and finding work

Finding a job is a key factor in your successful immigration. Looking for a job can be quite demanding; you need to be prepared to learn and tackle new challenges. To enter the labour market, you may have to accept, initially at least, lesser responsabilities than those you had in a previous job or even change your occupational field.

To conduct an effective job search, you must learn about the job market in the region where you want to work and take many other steps. Several factors contribute to a successful job search. Your guide contains information and suggestions of various things you can do to help you adapt and successfully access the Québec labour market.

To start the process

If you can begin the process before leaving for Québec, we encourage you to do so.

Once in Québec, make an appointment with the Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence. Its staff will help you take stock of your job situation. It will also provide different services to prepare you for the Québec labour market and will refer you to the appropriate resources based on your needs.

Useful tips

– For most jobs, you must have sufficient knowledge of written and oral French. On page 21 of your guide, you will find a section dedicated to the learning French or the improvement of French.

- You are advised to start your job search as soon as possible. Don't hesitate to mention that you are actively looking for work and to describe your skills.
- Before leaving your country, make sure you have all the documents (originals and certified true copies) related to your educational and occupational background. You will find information on important documents to bring with you on page 32 of your guide.

Emploi-Québec online services

This section of the guide, which focuses on work and job search, will direct you toward online services offered by Emploi-Québec – *Labour Market Information (LMI) On line* and *Online Placement*. These services will enable you to obtain information on the job market through a single website: emploiquebec.net.

LMI On line

LMI On line features reliable and up-to-date information on the duties, salaries and job prospects in over 500 trades and professions. It also indicates which trades and professions are most in demand in every region of Québec and what employers require. You can compare up to five occupations at once and consult data by region. LMI On line also gives information on training requirements for professions and trades and educational institutions where training is offered. Consult the *Complete Job Search Guide* for advice, examples, and tools to help you in your search.

Online Placement

This service gives you access to job offers from all regions of Québec.

Local employment centre

Employment services are provided throughout Québec via a public network of centres locaux d'emploi – CLEs (local employment centres). Each centre is equipped with a multiservice room where you will find publications and information on job vacancies, employment fairs, professional development courses and practical advice for finding a job. You can use photocopiers, fax machines and telephones to contact employers. Computers are also available to prepare your cover letter and curriculum vitæ or visit job search sites. If necessary, an employment assistance agent can meet you by appointment to conduct a preliminary assessment for employment assistance. Depending on your situation, the agent could also suggest an action plan tailored to your particular job market integration needs.

Adjusting to the realities and values of the Québec labour market

During your job search, you will be using methods and resources that may be very unfamiliar to you. To increase your chances of success, you should also learn about and adapt to the workings and values of the Québec labour market.

You may need support to ease your transition and adjustment to the labour market, to understand its mechanisms, rules, values, cultural codes and mode of functioning, as well as vocational and technical training in Québec and how to effectively use public employment services.

Immigration-Québec Services and community organizations that help new immigrants can:

> assess your job market adjustment needs;

> support your adaptation efforts, provide information and referral to appropriate resources, and help you monitor your integration process.

Community organizations also offer the following services:

> practical information on the labour market: laws and regulations, common practices and customs, etc.;

> information on the education system;

> introduction to tools and skills needed to conduct a job search in Québec;

> job twinning opportunities to help you better understand how your trade or profession is practiced in Québec.

To learn more

LABOUR MARKET ADAPTATION SERVICES

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS THAT HELP NEW IMMIGRANTS

- Contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*

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Notes on my progress

❑ I need support to ease my adaptation to the Québec labour market.

❑ I contacted an Immigration-Québec Service or a community organization that helps new immigrants.

❑ Immigration-Québec Service

Name of contact:

Contact information:

❑ Community organization

Organization name:

Name of contact:

Contact information:

Work and job search

❑ I was referred to the following resources:

❑ Local employment centre

Name of contact:
Contact information:

❑ Educational institution

Name of institution:
Name of contact:
Contact information:

❑ Other government services

Name of service:
Name of contact:
Contact information:

Assessing my professional profile in relation to the Québec labour market

To clarify and understand your situation in relation to the job market, it is very important, as a first step, that you should make an assessment of your professional profile. This will help you evaluate how your education, training and work experience match up with job opportunities in Québec. You can then set realistic employment goals to facilitate your entry into the job market. This section explains the main elements to be included in your assessment.

Exploring opportunities to practice my trade or profession in Québec

Since the job market is always evolving, the employment situation may have changed between the time you were selected and your arrival in Québec. Therefore, it is important to stay informed about job market developments in your field of work.

You may have been selected by Québec because of your socio-occupational profile. This does not necessarily mean that you will be able to find a job in your trade or profession immediately after you arrive. In many cases, you should anticipate the possibility of working in another trade or profession, at least at first.

Before leaving, seek information on job prospects in your field, labour market requirements and conditions for practicing your trade or profession in Québec. Several elements should be considered:

- the need to understand and speak French and, if necessary, English;
- problems having your diplomas or work experience recognized;
- whether or not your trade or profession is governed by a regulatory body;
- lack of work experience in Québec;
- possibility of the need to take training;
- job prospects in your trade or profession;
- the possibility of practicing your trade or profession as a self-employed worker.

MICC and Emploi-Québec websites contain a great deal of useful information. Once in Québec, contact an Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence, a community organization that helps new immigrants, or the local employment centre nearest you.

Work and job search

To learn more

INFORMATION ON OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE YOUR TRADE OR PROFESSION IN QUÉBEC

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*
  You will find many sites on the labour market.
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*
- **Community organizations that help new immigrants** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*
- **Emploi-Québec:** emploiquebec.net
- **Local employment centre nearest you** – contact information available on the Emploi-Québec site
  Information on Québec's job market, tips and recommendations on job searching are found in multiservice rooms.

Notes on my progress

❑ I read about the main factors to consider in exploring opportunities to work in my trade or profession.

❑ I expect to have the following problems integrating into the job market:

Learning the titles of my trade or profession in Québec

A trade or profession can have different titles from one country to the next. To effectively use the information and job market entry services offered in Québec, it is important to know the different titles of the trade or profession that you wish to practice.

To find these titles, consult the emploiquebec.net site, select *LMI On line* and click on *Trades and occupations*. Enter the title of your trade or profession and you will obtain the complete list of names corresponding to it in Québec. The number in parentheses is the National Occupational Classification (NOC) code. It gives a precise description of a trade or profession. Write down the number for each title corresponding to your trade or profession.

The NOC lists the most customary occupational titles in Canada. The title you want may not be there. In Québec, if you need help to find these titles or to validate your selection, contact the local employment centre nearest you.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON THE TITLES OF TRADES AND PROFESSIONS IN QUÉBEC

- **Emploi-Québec:** emploiquebec.net
- **Local employment centre nearest you** – contact information available on the Emploi-Québec site
- **Human Resources and Social Development Canada:** www.hrsdc.gc.ca Select *Individuals*, click on *Jobs*, then on *Work Search Tools and Tips*, then on *National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2001*.

Notes on my progress

❑ The titles of my trade or profession in Québec are:

Title:

NOC code:

Title:

NOC code:

Title:

NOC code:

Title:

NOC code:

Learning about the conditions for practicing a regulated trade or profession

In Québec, the practice of some trades and professions is regulated. For example, the engineering and nursing professions are governed by professional orders, while various other regulatory bodies govern the trades of electrician, painter, while the occupations of treepruner and driller are governed by other regulatory bodies. These bodies, whose mission is to protect the public, have the authority to set admission conditions and practice standards, evaluate skills and diplomas, and issue a certificate or permit to qualified candidates.

In other trades and professions, conditions of admission and practice are determined by regulatory requirements. This is true for instance for certain activities and disciplines in the financial sector, the teaching profession, and the heavy vehicle driver trade. See page 66 for the websites where you can obtain information on these trades and professions.

Get information before leaving for Québec

Check before you leave to see if your trade or profession is governed by a regulatory body or subject to regulation. This will give you a preliminary idea of the conditions you will have to meet to practice it in Québec and of the steps you will have to take in order to present your file to the organization. This preparation will speed up your entry into the job market.

For information on regulated trades and professions, visit the websites of the MICC and competent organizations. In some cases, you can begin your procedures for admission to a regulatory body before your departure.

Useful information

Admission fees to a professional order can be very high, ranging from several hundred to several thousand dollars, depending on the circumstances and the particular order. The fees cover processing the equivalence file, examinations, issuing the permit, admission to the order, etc. Training or internship fees are additional, where applicable.

Applying to a regulatory organization

If you plan to practice a regulated trade or profession in Québec, you must obtain a permit or certificate from the competent body. The conditions for obtaining this document vary from one organization to another. In all cases, however, you must meet the educational requirements for the particular trade or profession. You may also have to meet

other requirements, such as an internship, examination, training course, or work experience.

To find out which conditions apply to your situation, you must apply to the organization regulating your trade or profession. Make sure to supply all required documents so as not to delay or prevent the study of your application. To save time and avoid having to repeat certain courses, you should have a detailed official description of courses and internships you have completed and their duration.

Some regulatory bodies provide material to help candidates, before leaving for Québec, prepare for examinations required in the admission process. There may be a fee for this material.

An information service on regulated trades and professions

The MICC offers an information service on regulated trades and professions. It explains the regulatory situation in Québec, the process for receiving authorization to practice a regulated trade or profession, and required documents and fees. The service can also help you prepare your application and examine your options at every stage of the admission process. For more information, contact an Immigration-Québec Service located where you plan to settle or near your place of residence in Québec.

Pages 127 and 128 of your guide list the main regulated trades and professions in Québec.

To learn more

Regulated professions*

LIST OF PROFESSIONS GOVERNED BY PROFESSIONAL ORDERS, INFORMATION ON THESE PROFESSIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE ORDERS

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*

OBTAINING A PERMIT TO PRACTICE, REGISTRATION WITH A PROFESSIONAL ORDER, ADMINISTRATIVE STEPS AND EQUIVALENCY STANDARDS FOR DIPLOMAS AND TRAINING

- **Professional order responsible for your profession** – contact information on Québec orders is available on the MICC website

Regulated trades*

LIST OF REGULATED TRADES IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND OUTSIDE THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, INFORMATION ON THESE TRADES AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR REGULATORY BODIES

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*

ACCESS TO REGULATED TRADES IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND OUTSIDE THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, CONDITIONS FOR OBTAINING A CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY, DESCRIPTION OF TASKS AND LENGTH OF APPRENTICESHIP REQUIRED FOR EACH TRADE, PROVINCIAL QUALIFICATION EXAMINATION

- **Construction industry** – Commission de la construction du Québec: www.ccq.org
- **Non-construction sector** – Emploi-Québec: emploiquebec.net
- **Local employment centre nearest you** – contact information available on the Emploi-Québec website

Examples of other trades and professions subject to regulation*

LIST OF ACTIVITIES AND DISCIPLINES IN THE FINANCIAL SECTOR, INFORMATION ON THESE ACTIVITIES

- **Autorité des marchés financiers:** www.lautorite.qc.ca

ADMISSION TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION

- **Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport:** www.mels.gouv.qc.ca

ADMISSION TO THE TRADE OF HEAVY VEHICLE DRIVER

- **Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec:** www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca

*** For more information on regulated trades and professions**

- **Immigration-Québec Service** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*

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Notes on my progress

❑ I contacted the organization that governs my trade or profession.

Organization name:

Contact information:

Contact person:

❑ I contacted an Immigration-Québec Service for help approaching the regulatory body, if needed.

Date:

❑ I submitted my application to the regulatory body.

Date:

Cost:

❑ I received an answer to my application.

Date:

❑ I must meet the following requirements to obtain a permit to practice or certificate of competency or qualification:

Planning to ask for an *Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec*

An *Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec* (comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec) is a general comparison between two official educational systems. It indicates a correlation between the Québec education system and its main diplomas and education received outside Québec. It also provides a general description of education documents (diplomas and academic transcripts) and studies done in a school system officially recognized by authorities responsible for education in a country or province other than Québec.

The *Évaluation comparative* can be useful in your job search, in applying for admission to a program of study, or in applying to certain regulatory bodies (when required). The *Évaluation comparative* issued by the MICC is neither a diploma nor is it binding on any person, educational institution, professional order, or any other body governing a profession or trade. These entities determine their own evaluation criteria. There is a fee to apply for an *Évaluation comparative*.

Educational documents

To avoid unnecessary delays, you must provide the original diplomas and transcripts or copies of these documents certified as true and faithful by the educational institution you attended or by the competent government educational authorities of the country where the studies were carried out.

Before leaving for Québec

- If you want to work in a regulated trade or profession, you should contact the competent regulatory body before asking for an *Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec*.
- You can apply for an *Évaluation comparative* to avoid delays should you be required to produce one at a later date. Information documents and the application form are available on the Immigration-Québec website or at the Québec Immigration Office for your area.

In Québec

- You can obtain these documents at the Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON THE *ÉVALUATION COMPARATIVE DES ÉTUDES EFFECTUÉES HORS DU QUÉBEC* AND THE REQUEST FORM

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*
- **Québec Immigration Office abroad covering your territory** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*

Notes on my progress

❑ I checked whether I should apply for an *Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec*.

❑ I requested the *Évaluation comparative*, where applicable.

Date:

❑ I obtained my *Évaluation comparative*.

Date:

Understanding the Québec labour market

The following aspects should be taken into consideration in order to understand the Québec labour market:

> current labour market conditions;

> working conditions associated with a trade or profession;

> trades and professions in which labour demand is highest, by region and for Québec as a whole;

> job prospects by trade, profession or activity sector, in coming years;

> how employees are selected in Québec;

> skills in demand by employers;

> ways to prove your worth with future employers;

> how to act during a job interview;

> labour standards (pay, vacation, etc.), occupational health and safety, the situation of working women.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON THE QUÉBEC LABOUR MARKET

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*
  You will find many sites on the labour market.
- **Community organizations that help new immigrants** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*
- **Emploi-Québec:** emploiquebec.net

LABOUR STANDARDS, RECOURSE AVAILABLE FOR PECUNIARY COMPLAINTS, PROHIBITED PRACTICES, ETC.

- **Commission des normes du travail:** www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca

You will find a wealth of information on the emploiquebec.net website, which links you to *LMI On line* and *Online Placement*. Other sites also provide relevant information and post job offers. We urge you to visit them. In Québec, you may also visit the local employment centre nearest you.

Notes on my progress

❑ I wish to learn more about the following aspects of the Québec labour market:

Learning about job opportunities in different regions of Québec

Québec's many regions offer an excellent quality of life, diversified and dynamic economies, and many job opportunities. Regional job prospects found on the Emploi-Québec website will give you some idea of differences between regions of Québec and job vacancies for each. You can also request information on each region by e-mail; a list of e-mail addresses is provided on page 132 of your guide.

You can learn about job prospects in areas outside Montreal by attending information sessions on the regions given in French at Immigration-Québec Services in the metropolitan area. Also visit the websites of the MICC, Emploi-Québec and the Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation.

To learn more

JOB PROSPECTS IN REGIONS ACROSS QUÉBEC

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*
- **Emploi-Québec:** emploiquebec.net Click on *LMI On line* or *Online Placement.*
- **Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation:** www.mdeie.gouv.qc.ca

Notes on my progress

❑ I have identified job opportunities in different regions.

Job opportunities:

Region:

Job opportunities:

Region:

Job opportunities:

Region:

Job opportunities:

Region:

Learning about self-employment and starting a business

Becoming an entrepreneur or self-employed worker in Québec

If you have a certain amount of capital available, you may want to create your own job, start up your own business or join an existing business. To succeed, you must have a good understanding of the Québec business environment and prepare a business plan that includes a serious market study. If this option interests you, a number of resources are available to assist you.

Before leaving for Québec, you can start learning about the Québec business environment by visiting the Immigration-Québec website. You can also consult the guide *Business Start-up*, available on the Government Services for Business Portal. All Québec regions have a network of government services for anyone interested in becoming a self-employed worker or an entrepreneur in Québec.

Services to business immigrants

The MICC offers reception and guidance services to business immigrants. If you immigrated to Québec as an entrepreneur, self-employed worker or investor, contact the Centre de services aux gens d'affaires – CSGA (Business immigrants service centre).

To learn more

INFORMATION ON SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND INFORMATION RESOURCES TO HELP YOU SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT YOUR PROJECT IN QUÉBEC

- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*
- **Portal for business start-ups in Québec:** www.entreprises.gouv.qc.ca
- **Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation:** www.mdeie.gouv.qc.ca

INFORMATION ON SERVICES TO BUSINESS IMMIGRANTS

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Business*

Notes on my progress

❑ Resource person to contact

Name:

Contact information:

❑ Resource person to contact

Name:

Contact information:

❑ Resource person to contact

Name:

Contact information:

Identifying my professional and personal skills

Anyone wishing to enter the labour market should first survey one's skills. This assessment will enable you to emphasize your strengths, knowledge, abilities and personal qualities.

Take into account the elements beside when drawing up your assessment. They are the main factors considered by Québec employers in hiring.

After arriving in Québec, if you need assistance in preparing or completing your assessment, you can consult a community organization that helps new immigrants or the local employment centre nearest you.

My occupational skills

- ❑ List your specific knowledge: spoken and written languages, computer skills, etc.
- ❑ List your jobs starting with the most recent. Concentrate on your most important work experience. It may help if you try to summarize a normal work week. For each job, indicate:
  - > its duration in months or years;
  - > title of your position and company name;
  - > your tasks and responsibilities in order of importance;
  - > your accomplishments, your "big hits;"
  - > personal skills you developed on the job (e.g. leadership, teamwork, etc.).
- ❑ List your education and training, indicating:
  - > diplomas earned, in what year and your specialization, if any;
  - > skills acquired through this training;
  - > other training – on-the-job training, seminars, conferences, etc. (e.g. computer training, sales training programs, project management, marketing seminars, etc.).
- ❑ List your most recent volunteer work (e.g. member of a school committee).
- ❑ List your leisure activities and interests if you wish. Be aware that your hobbies can say a lot about you. For example, participation in a team sport may lead to believe that you like teamwork.

A "big hit"

A "big hit" is an accomplishment on the job. It could be a document you produced, an improvement in the company, an award you won, an increase in sales, etc.

My personal skills

The personal skills listed beside are particularly valued by companies. Carefully read the statements and check off the four or five skills that best characterize you. This exercise will help you determine your strong points, making it easier to mention them up in your cover letter or at job interviews.

- ❑ **Ability to detect problems:** You quickly recognize problems in a given situation. You detect situations where important information is lacking.
- ❑ **Assertiveness:** You are capable of expressing and defending your opinions.
- ❑ **Clarity in communications:** You explain or write ideas in a way that others can easily understand.
- ❑ **Cooperation:** You work effectively with others.
- ❑ **Deductive skills:** You can predict how others will react to a situation.
- ❑ **Efficiency:** You find faster ways to perform tasks. You find ways to achieve the expected results.
- ❑ **Flexibility:** You alter your methods and behaviour to adapt to new situations. You quickly integrate into a new work team.
- ❑ **Initiative:** You take action when the situation demands it without waiting for your supervisor's approval.
- ❑ **Leadership:** You have the ear, respect and confidence of others. You can convey your ideas and convince other people to adhere to them.
- ❑ **Listening skills:** You take time to listen to people around you. You are attentive to the needs of others.
- ❑ **Methodical mind:** You tackle tasks step by step. You establish priorities based on the objectives expected.
- ❑ **Perseverance:** You try hard to overcome obstacles. You make an effort to obtain the information or help you need despite difficulties.
- ❑ **Precision:** You pay special attention to details. You verify the accuracy of information you are given.

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- ❑ **Reliability:** You get things done on time. You meet expectations that others set for you.
- ❑ **Self-control:** You can control your emotions when you are angry. You weigh things carefully before you speak or act.
- ❑ **Self-sufficiency:** You perform tasks with little or no assistance.
- ❑ **Teamwork:** You respect the roles and responsibilities of team members and you cooperate to reach target objectives.

To learn more

INFORMATION AND TOOLS TO HELP YOU IDENTIFY YOUR SKILLS

- **Emploi-Québec:** emploiquebec.net
- **Local employment centre nearest you** – contact information available on the Emploi-Québec website
- **External manpower resource of Emploi-Québec** – contact information available at the local employment centre nearest you

Determining my employment plan

After conducting your search for information and preparing your professional skills assessment, you will be able to target realistic objectives. These objectives should take into account recognition of your diplomas, your job experience and labour market needs.

My employment file

Your employment file should highlight your experience and aptitudes that make you stand out from the crowd. It should emphasize your initiative, organizational abilities and capacity to work in a team. It is very important to have all the necessary documents confirming your experience and qualifications. The file should contain:

> a curriculum vitæ presenting your skills and achievements;

> originals or certified true copies of:

- your diplomas, academic transcripts, certificates and other attestations of education,
- your attestations of continuing education, internships or professional development training,
- description and duration of courses and internships,
- professional or trade permits to practice and certificates of competency or qualification,
- attestations of employment and job experience, task descriptions and letters of recommendation from former employers;

> an *Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec*, if needed.

Finding a job in your chosen trade or profession takes time, preparation and adjustment to corporate requirements. If your trade or profession is regulated, you must fulfill the requirements of the relevant regulatory body.

In Québec, if you need help setting your occupational goals, consult the Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence, a community organization that helps new immigrants or the local employment centre nearest you. Their staff can help you formulate these goals, explore methods to attain them and refer you to appropriate resources if necessary.

To learn more

ASSISTANCE TO HELP YOU DEFINE YOUR EMPLOYMENT PLAN

- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available at www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *To reach us*
- **Local employment centre nearest you** – contact information available on the site emploiquebec.net
- **External manpower resource of Emploi-Québec** – contact information available at the local employment centre nearest you

Notes on my progress

❑ I need help to prepare my employment plan.

Organization name:

Contact information:

Resource person to contact:

❑ I have prepared my employment plan.

Targeted job(s):

Implementing a realistic action plan to obtain a job that matches my professional skills

A realistic action plan will help you organize your approach properly and avoid disappointment and wasted time and money.

Obtaining a first work experience in Québec

Your first job – even if it is part time – will familiarize you with working practices in Québec and give you Québec job experience to put on your curriculum vitæ. It can also expand your network of contacts and may perhaps even lead to a promotion within the company if you prove your abilities.

Learning job search techniques

Job search techniques are excellent tools for entering the labour market. They will enable you to:

- increase your chances of getting a job interview by helping you use tools that present your strong points (curriculum vitæ, cover letter, job application form, etc.);
- learn where to look for job vacancies;
- prepare for interviews and anticipate questions that employers could ask;
- approach employers as effectively as possible;
- follow up your job searches.

To learn more about job search techniques, contact the local employment centre nearest you or an external manpower resource of Emploi-Québec.

Every employer you contact will ask for your Social Insurance Number (SIN).

Apply for one immediately after you arrive in Québec.

Information on the SIN is given on page 36 of your guide.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON JOB SEARCH TECHNIQUES

- **Emploi-Québec:** emploiquebec.net
  Read the *Complete Job Search Guide* on the site.
- **Local employment centre nearest you** – contact information available on the Emploi-Québec website
- **External manpower resource of Emploi-Québec** – contact information available at the local employment centre nearest you
- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:**
  www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*
  You will find many sites on the labour market.

Notes on my progress

❑ I read Emploi-Québec's *Complete Job Search Guide*.

❑ I need to learn job search techniques.

❑ I contacted the local employment centre nearest me or an external manpower resource of Emploi-Québec.

Contact information:

Contact person:

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Finding a first job

It is very important to make contact with the Québec labour market quickly and understand how it works. Public and private resources throughout Québec can help direct your search and present your services to potential employers in a favourable light, but they cannot guarantee you a job.

Your first job may call for less qualifications than you had hoped, or it may not match your job qualifications. Depending on your situation, you may want to keep this job while starting or continuing a training course, or else use it to pay your way while you look for something better.

Finding a job in Québec is essentially an individual responsibility that takes personal effort. The key to success is to invest time and energy in your search and, above all, to be well prepared. Do not neglect any resource and use every means available:

> Use your network of contacts to mention that you are looking for work and what type of job you want, and ask them to let you know if they hear about a job offer.

> Go to the local employment centre nearest you to obtain services appropriate to your situation.

> Find out about the conditions and services of private placement agencies.

> Consult the classified ad sections in newspapers under the headings *Help wanted* and *Careers*.

> Visit the various job search websites. You can search for offers by region, employer and keyword.

> Visit employment fairs.

Useful tips

– Learn about the business of companies where you plan to apply and ask for an interview with their human resources department.

– Apply for several jobs at the same time. This will increase your chances of finding one quickly.

– Contact employers directly, in person or by telephone.

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Did you know?

> The dominant values in Québec companies are generally equality, co-operation, flexibility and participation. Québec managers value employee involvement in the company. They do not hesitate to consult employees when needed, although this is not done on a systematic basis. They expect direct communication and constructive comments.

> Equality of opportunity is a very important value in Québec. Even if you come from an upper socio-economic milieu and have diplomas from top schools in your country of origin, employers expect you to prove yourself just like any Quebecer. This might involve accepting a job for which you are overqualified, a part-time position or contract work, at least for a certain time.

> In Québec, what is written in the employment contract is more important than the relationship you can establish with your employer. Although job duties are generally precisely defined, there is room for personal initiative by employees. If a dispute arises with your employer, it will generally be settled according to the terms of the contract rather than through any relationship you formed with your employer.

> Québec employers value adherence to work schedules and meeting deadlines. Work meetings have a fixed agenda that fosters structured and orderly discussions based on the meeting's objectives.

> In Québec, hiring and promotions are generally based on skills, achievements and individual employee performance. Québec employers often take into account an employee's ability to integrate into his or her work team.

> Women are very present on the Québec labour market. Just like men, they work in the trade or profession of their choice. They hold a variety of positions at all levels of the corporate hierarchy.

> In Québec, it is believed that young persons can be considered competent even if they have little experience. As a result, they sometimes supervise fellow workers who are more experienced than they are.

> Québec managers generally seek consensus and resolve disputes through negotiation and compromise.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON JOB SEARCHES, JOB VACANCIES AND JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*
  You will find many sites on the labour market.
- **Emploi-Québec:** emploiquebec.net
  Click on *LMI On line* or on *Online Placement*.
- **Local employment centre nearest you** – contact information available on the Emploi-Québec website
- **External manpower resource of Emploi-Québec** – contact information available at the local employment centre nearest you

INFORMATION ON LABOUR STANDARDS THAT ALL EMPLOYERS MUST RESPECT, QUESTIONS ON WORKING CONDITIONS, PAID HOLIDAYS, VACATIONS, ETC.

- **Commission des normes du travail:** www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca

INFORMATION ON LABOUR RELATIONS IN QUÉBEC, UNIONS, COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

- **Ministère du Travail:** www.travail.gouv.qc.ca
- **Commission des relations du travail:** www.crt.gouv.qc.ca

Notes on my progress

❑ List of employers who interest me, including their addresses, the name of persons to contact and their telephone numbers:

❑ List of steps already taken and those still to take:

> Telephone calls
> Interviews
> Company visits
> Follow-up

❑ Websites and newspapers consulted:

Proving myself on the job

Once you have accepted a job, you have to prove to your employer that he or she did the right thing in hiring you. Here are some tips:

> Keep a positive attitude. Accept criticism and take heed of suggestions for improving your work. In Québec, acknowledging that there is room for improvement is generally appreciated.

> Be on time and stick to your work schedule. In Québec, time is considered to be money. If you cannot arrive on time, tell your employer that you will be late. Your employer may request a reason for your tardiness. It would be preferable to respond to his inquiry, even if it may seem to you an invasion of privacy.

> Dress appropriately in accordance with the company's dress code.

> Accept responsibilities. Make sure that you are up to the task. Understand what your employer expects of you. Don't hesitate to ask questions.

> Treat everyone with respect. This is the key to a healthy work climate. Respecting colleagues implies maintaining egalitarian relations with both men and women, whatever their status within the company. Although a friendly work environment is often desirable, avoid familiarity that could be deemed as inappropriate.

> Show initiative. Don't always wait until you are told what to do. If you see that a job needs to be done, offer to do it!

> Be reliable. If you say you are going to do something, do it. If you are unable to do it, tell your employer or else you risk being seen as unreliable.

> Support your colleagues. In Québec, while personal achievement is valued, harmony with one's fellow workers is also sought.

> Control your emotions. Don't let little misunderstandings blow out of proportion. Settle differences calmly and objectively.

To learn more

INFORMATION AND ADVICE ON ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR THAT WILL HELP YOU PROVE YOURSELF

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*
  You will find many sites with information on this subject.
- **Community organizations that help new immigrants** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*
- **Local employment centre nearest you** – contact information available on the site emploiquebec.net

Notes on my progress

❑ I want to know more about how to prove myself on the job.

❑ Contacts

Name:

Contact information:

Name:

Contact information:

Continuing my proceedings

Depending on the trade or profession that you wish to practice, greater preparation may be needed for you to reach your employment goals.

Meeting regulatory body requirements, where applicable

After applying to the relevant regulatory body, you will learn what requirements you will need to satisfy to work in your trade or profession. Page 64 of your guide gives additional information on Québec's regulatory bodies and access to a regulated trade or profession.

If you need help applying for admission to a regulatory body, the MICC offers an information service on regulated trades and professions. For more information, contact an Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence.

Admission to a professional order

The procedure for admission to a professional order is sometimes long and complex. In addition to the time the order takes to process your file, you must consider the availability and duration of courses or internships that you are required to follow, the frequency of examinations held by the order and the Office québécois de la langue française, and delays due to other necessary administrative steps such as obtaining academic transcripts, additional papers, etc.

To learn more

CONDITIONS AND STEPS TO OBTAIN A PERMIT TO PRACTICE OR A CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY OR QUALIFICATION

- **Regulatory body for your trade or profession**
  Most regulated trades and professions are listed on the MICC website: www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*.

INFORMATION AND HELP IN SEEKING ADMISSION TO A PROFESSIONAL ORDER OR OTHER REGULATORY BODY

- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website

Notes on my progress

The steps that I may need to take to obtain a permit to practice or certificate of competency or qualification are:

❑ Examination

Place of examination:

Date:

Cost:

❑ Training

Place of training:

Start date:

Cost:

❑ Interview

Place of interview:

Date:

❑ Examination of the Office québécois de la langue française

Place of examination:

Date:

Cost:

❑ Internship

Place of internship:

Start date:

❑ I obtained my permit to practice or certificate of competency or qualification.

Seeking training if necessary

The labour market is always changing, particularly in areas of rapid technological progress such as information technology, high tech and the health sciences. To remain competitive, you need to update your knowledge and keep up with the latest technological developments. This is just as true for people educated in Québec as it is for newcomers.

Furthermore, for many trades and professions, the qualifications required and work methods vary from one country to another. Newcomers must therefore make a special effort to adapt their knowledge and skills in order to integrate in the labour market of the host society.

Adult education or continuing education

There are several reasons for starting courses or completing your education:

- You may need training to improve your skills or become familiar with different aspects of practicing your trade or profession in Québec: learning new technologies, understanding laws and regulations applicable to the trade or profession you wish to practice, adapting to different ways of relating with customers, etc.
- For a regulated trade or profession, additional training will probably be required to adapt your professional qualifications to the specifics of practicing it in Québec and to obtain a permit to practice or certificate of competency or qualification. The regulatory body will determine what training is required.
- You may have to acquire a new general or occupational training following a professional reorientation.

In Québec, if you need help defining your training needs, contact the Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence, a community organization that helps new immigrants, or the local employment centre nearest you. Their staff will help clarify your choices and refer you to appropriate resources.

About education

Adult education takes several forms, including courses given in adult education centres, college and university courses, training by regulatory bodies, on-the-job workshops or training, and distance education. These options vary in duration from a few days to more than a year.

The fees charged are generally quite high. Although you will probably have to pay them yourself, you may also be entitled to receive student aid in the form of loans or bursaries, or a loan from a financial institution. In some cases, following an evaluation of your situation,

you could receive financial help from Emploi-Québec.

Educational institutions in Québec offer full-time or part-time day or evening programs. Many Quebecers prefer to work and study at the same time. Taking part-time or evening courses can round out your education while allowing you work at the same time.

With the exception of distance education, admission to courses is not on an ongoing basis and places are often limited. Waits can therefore be expected. Since the availability of courses may vary, you should regularly seek information from regulatory bodies, educational institutions and Emploi-Québec.

Distance education has several advantages if you want to upgrade your training at your own pace and in your own home. It includes training online or by correspondence and represents an attractive option to help you start your integration process before arriving in Québec. For example, courses are available in information technology or office automation.

Useful information

Admission to courses often requires a sound knowledge of French. This is another good reason to start learning French before your departure.

Additional information on adult education and continuing education can be found on page 124 of your guide.

To learn more

DESCRIPTION OF INITIAL VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

- **Inforoute site of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport:** www.inforoutefpt.org

INFORMATION ON CONTINUING EDUCATION IN QUÉBEC

- **Directory of continuing education:** www.formation.jobboom.com

TRAINING RECOMMENDED FOR PRACTICING YOUR TRADE OR PROFESSION AND HOW TO OBTAIN IT

- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the site of the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles: www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *To reach us*
- **Community organizations that help new immigrants** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*
- **Professional orders** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Work*
- **Commission de la construction du Québec:** www.ccq.org
- **Emploi-Québec**: emploiquebec.net
- **Educational institutions** – list available on the website of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport: www.mels.gouv.qc.ca
- **Local employment centre nearest you** – contact information available on the Emploi-Québec website

DISTANCE EDUCATION, RESOURCES AND COURSES OFFERED

- **Télé-université:** www.teluq.uquebec.ca
- **Network of francophone distance education of Canada:** www.refad.ca
- **Le-Formateur/Portal for online training** (information technology and languages) offered by 16 CEGEPs in Québec: www.le-formateur.com
- **Société de formation à distance des commissions scolaires du Québec:** www.sofad.qc.ca
- **Cégep@distance:** www.cegepadistance.ca

FINANCIAL PLANNING OF STUDIES AND ASSISTANCE

- **Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport:** www.afe.gouv.qc.ca
- **Canlearn:** www.canlearn.ca The *Financing* link gives pertinent information on financial planning of education, bank loans, bursaries, etc.
- www.studentawards.com

Notes on my progress

❑ I identified a resource person to help me assess my job situation and training needs, if any.

Name of resource:

Address:

Name of contact:

Telephone:

❑ I need training.

Name of training or program:

❑ I will take this training.

At the following educational institution:

Address:

Registration date:

Start date:

Cost:

At a distance, with the following educational institution or agency:

Address:

Registration date:

Start date:

Cost:

Learning English, in addition to French, if the job requires it

Employers may require you to know English to be able to practice your trade or profession in certain jobs, economic areas or regions.

In this case, you must acquire an adequate knowledge of the language. There are different methods for learning English. Educational institutions and language schools offer courses on their premises or distance programs.

If you already have advanced knowledge of French, find out about opportunities to take English courses in your country.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON RESOURCES AND INSTITUTIONS THAT GIVE ENGLISH INSTRUCTION

- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the site of the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles: www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *To reach us*
- **Community organizations that help new immigrants** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*

SCHOOL BOARDS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- **Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport:** www.mels.gouv.qc.ca

ONLINE TRAINING – EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, RESOURCES AND COURSES OFFERED

- **Télé-université:** www.teluq.uquebec.ca
- **Le-Formateur/Portal for on-line training** (information technology and languages) given by 16 CEGEPs in Québec: www.le-formateur.com
- **Regional centre for distance education of Greater Montréal:** www.cspi.qc.ca
- **Société de formation à distance des commissions scolaires du Québec:** www.sofad.qc.ca

Notes on my progress

❑ I need to learn or improve my English.

❑ The English educational institutions that interest me are:

Name of institution:

Contact information:

Contact person:

Name of institution:

Contact information:

Contact person:

❑ I am registering for an English course.

At the following institution:

Address:

Registration date:

Start date:

Cost:

Distance education, with the following educational institution or organization:

Address:

Registration date:

Start date:

Cost:

Following up on my action plan

The successful completion of your professional integration is a demanding process. Use all methods available to you to conduct your search and don't hesitate to ask for help if needed.

Finding a job that matches my professional skills

Since arriving in Québec, you may have been working in a job other than the one you had hoped for. It often takes time and numerous efforts to find a job in which you can fully use your occupational skills. Your guide suggests several activities to help you prepare and implement a realistic action plan. You have probably already started or completed several steps of your plan. If you need to review your goals or give them added precision, do not hesitate to ask for help from competent resources to give you the best possible chances of success.

Throughout this process, an integration support agent from the Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence, or from a community organization that helps new immigrants, can help you identify the probable causes of your difficulties and direct you to appropriate resources.

To learn more

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE TO HELP YOU IN YOUR INTEGRATION PROCESS

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles:** www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca, link *Work*
  You will find many sites on the labour market.
- **Immigration-Québec Service located near your place of residence** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *To reach us*
- **Community organizations that help new immigrants** – contact information available on the MICC website, link *Ministerial partners*

INFORMATION ON JOB SEARCH AND JOB VACANCIES

- **Emploi-Québec:** emploiquebec.net
  Click on *LMI On line* or on *Online Placement*.
- **Local employment centre nearest you** – contact information available on the Emploi-Québec website

Notes on my progress

❑ Resource person to contact

Name:

Contact information:

❑ Resource person to contact

Name:

Contact information:

98 Additional information

Arrival and first days

To reach my destination

You will find an information counter at all airports, railway stations and bus terminals where you will be told about the best way to reach your destination. The different ways to travel are:

To Montréal:

> by shuttle bus, from Montréal-Trudeau airport, for a reasonable price;

> by taxi, from an airport, railway station, or marine or bus terminal. The fare is government-regulated and determined by a meter that the driver starts when departing. A flat rate can be negotiated for long distances;

> by rental vehicle.

To areas outside the Montréal region:

> By train or bus. For similar prices, the bus has more varied schedules and routes than the train. Railway stations and bus terminals are generally located near the city centre;

> By rental vehicle;

> By plane. Flying will save you a lot of time, but will cost much more than other types of transportation.

Useful tip

If you have the time and means, use your first days in Québec to get to know your new surroundings. Pretend that you are a tourist and locate the attractions and main streets of the city where you are living.

Important documents to keep in my possession

You become eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship after living in Canada for at least three years as a permanent resident. Keep the originals of the following documents in a safe place:

> your passport or travel document;

> your *Certificat de sélection du Québec (CSQ)*;

> your valid permanent resident visa affixed to your passport (issued by Canadian authorities);

> confirmation of your permanent resident status (issued by Canadian authorities).

The latter two items confirm your permanent resident status. You will need them for most of the steps you will have to take. Make sure the information is correct, particularly your date of birth and the spelling of your name. Always use copies (certified, if necessary) when you are required to submit proof of identity for an official application.

Telephone directories

As heavy telephone users, Quebecers use telephone directories as a source of information. That way they can get a lot done without having to go from one place to another. All telephone subscribers receive directories free of charge. The front pages explain how to use them.

Useful tips

- When you reach an employee of the MICC or of another organization, write down his or her name and phone number and the name of the department where he or she works. This will make future contacts easier.
- Before going to the MICC or another government office, check their business hours. In many cases, you will need to make an appointment beforehand.
- If you cannot yet communicate easily in French, bring someone along to serve as an interpret for you.

Canadian currency

The currency used in Québec is the Canadian dollar ($). It is divided into 100 cents (¢) and comes in the following denominations:

> Coins: 1¢, 5¢, 10¢, 25¢, 50¢ (rarely used), $1 and $2;

> Bank notes commonly used: $5, $10, $20, $50 and $100.

If you have no Canadian currency on you when you arrive, you can buy some at foreign exchange bureaus found in most large airports. Elsewhere, the service is available from foreign exchange dealers and some credit unions and bank branches.

Sales taxes

Almost all goods and services are subject to consumption taxes imposed by the federal and provincial governments. The federal Goods and Services Tax (GST) is 6% and the Québec Sales Tax (QST) is 7.5%. These taxes are not usually included in the tag prices.

Income taxes

Revenue from income tax and other taxes is used to finance public services. Consequently, every individual is responsible for filing an income tax return.

The tax system is based on the principle of self-assessment. You must declare your income and deductions, then calculate the share of tax you will have to pay each year. The amount of tax you owe depends on your income and specific situation, both personal and familial. This is called an "individual income tax return."

You are required to file two income tax returns, one to the provincial government and the other to the federal government, using the forms prescribed for this purpose.

The tax year runs from January 1 to December 31. Income tax returns must generally be sent to both governments no later than April 30 of the following year.

In addition to reporting your income, deductions and calculation of taxes payable, your income tax return enables governments to determine your eligibility for various social programs.

Useful tips

- If you have difficulty with your income tax return, contact Revenu Québec and the Canada Revenue Agency. Their information agents will help you free of charge. You can also contact tax experts (specialized agencies, accountants), but you must pay for this service.
- Do not neglect to file your income tax return or you may have to pay interest charges and penalties.

101 Additional information

Useful information

Provincial and federal income tax forms for individuals are available respectively at:

- Revenu Québec, Services Québec and credit unions;
- Canada Revenue Agency and post offices.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON THE TAX SYSTEM

- **Revenu Québec:** www.revenu.gouv.qc.ca
- **Canada Revenue Agency:** www.cra-arc.gc.ca

Business hours

The law allows most stores to stay open to the public from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. from Monday to Friday, and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

More flexible hours are allowed for supermarkets, neighbourhood convenience stores (called *dépanneurs*), pharmacies, stores in airports, air terminals, and hospitals; bookstores, service stations and leisure or tourist businesses such as restaurants, cinemas, museums, hotels, etc.

Public transit

Most large cities have a public bus system. Montreal is the only city with a metro (subway), which is particularly appreciated in winter. With four lines and 65 stations, the underground train serves the heart of Greater Montreal and connects the south shore of the Saint Lawrence River to the city centre. Five suburban train lines provide connections between the urban zone of Montréal and surrounding suburbs.

Fare payment methods vary according to municipality. You can generally pay cash in the metro and on buses and certain suburban trains. Exact change is required on buses. You can also pay with tickets bought at authorized stores or in a metro station.

Useful tips

- Once you are settled, take the time to discover the way of life of Quebecers and familiarize yourself with the prices of goods and services. Plan your budget carefully, taking into account essential costs like housing, food, transportation, etc. It is preferable to use your savings wisely and gradually adjust your budget.
- You can ask for advice on consumer issues at the Office de la protection du consommateur (OPC) (www.opc.gouv.qc.ca). Among other things, you can find out what guarantees you can insist on, your recourse under contracts signed with door-to-door salespeople, and mail and telephone orders, and online purchases.

Tickets are cheaper when bought in strips or booklets. If you need to take more than one bus (or the metro and a bus) for a single journey, you do not have to pay each time. Get a transfer from the bus driver or an automatic dispenser in the metro station. Keep the transfer if you need to board another vehicle. If you travel mainly by public transit, you can buy a monthly or weekly pass that allows unlimited travel during its validity period.

Children, students and people aged 65 and over can buy tickets and monthly or weekly passes at reduced prices. To qualify, they must first obtain an identity card from the regional public transit commission.

Useful information

For information on schedules, routes and itineraries, call the telephone information service of your city's public transit commission.

Climate

Because of its geographic location, Québec has a continental climate characterized by harsh winters and relatively hot summers. Although seasonal temperatures vary by region, they reach an average 22° Celsius (°C) in summer and −10°C in winter. Most new immigrants underestimate the severity of Québec winters. In fact, temperatures of −25°C to −30°C are quite common and snow is generally abundant. In contrast, the mercury often exceeds 27°C in summer. Despite these extremes, winter and summer can be very pleasant as long as you dressed properly.

Houses have heating systems that provide all the necessary comfort during the cold season. For your health and well-being in winter, do not try to save money on clothing or heating. It is generally recommended that you keep the temperature of your dwelling at a minimum of 20°C during the day and 18°C at night.

Useful information

Dress appropriately in winter when going outdoors by wearing a sweater, warm coat, scarf, gloves or mittens, and warm waterproof boots. Keep your head well covered with a hat, tuque or hood.

Housing

The lease

After you visit an apartment and express interest in renting it, the landlord may sometimes ask you to fill out a form in which you give information enabling him to check your tenant record (your behaviour in a previous apartment and your ability to pay the rent). This form, called an "Offer to Lease," often contains a clause giving the landlord a few days to check your record before letting you know whether he accepts you as a tenant. Since acceptance by the landlord leads to the signing of the lease, it is very important to not sign more than one offer to lease at a time and instead wait for the answer to one offer before making another. You will thus avoid being bound by more than one lease.

If you have a verbal agreement, you have the right to request written confirmation of this agreement. If the landlord does not want to use the official form of the Régie du logement, he must still give you, within 10 days after the agreement was reached, a document containing the following information:

- > name and address of the landlord;
- > your name;
- > amount of the rent;
- > exact address of the apartment that you are renting;
- > obligatory annotations required by law.

When the landlord uses the official lease form of the Régie du logement, he must complete it in French unless you have an agreement with him to the contrary.

The landlord must give the tenant a copy of the lease within 10 days of its signature. The lease must also indicate whether the dwelling is located in a new building or on premisses recently converted to residential use, in which case the Régie du logement may not establish the rent for the first five years. At the time of signing the lease, the owner may demand advance payment only for the first rental period, which is usually one month. He cannot require a deposit for returning the keys or to cover the cost of possible damages. He must then deliver your apartment on the date stipulated in the lease.

The lease can be terminated only with the agreement of both parties or in certain exceptional cases prescribed by law. If you expect to leave your apartment, you must give your landlord advance notice. For a one-year lease, notice must be given between three and six months before the end of the lease or else it will be automatically renewed under the same conditions. For a shorter lease, the notice period may also be shorter.

Useful information

- Under the *Civil Code of Québec*, the landlord may not, among other things, refuse an apartment to anyone or impose more onerous conditions solely because the person is pregnant or has one or more children, unless this refusal is warranted by the apartment size. The *Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* also prohibits refusing access to an apartment on grounds of discrimination based on race, color, sex, pregnancy, religion, ethnic or national origin, or social condition.
- If you have reason to believe that you are being refused an apartment due to discrimination, contact either the Régie du logement du Québec or the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec.

Rent

As a tenant, you must pay the full rent on the date indicated in your lease, which is generally the first day of the month. If your rent is more than three weeks late, the landlord may obtain a termination of your lease to evict you from the apartment at any time of the year. If your rent is often late, causing the landlord serious prejudice, he may also apply to the Régie du logement to terminate your lease.

If you do not receive notice of a rent increase and you intend to leave your apartment at the end of the lease, you must notify the landlord or else your lease will be automatically renewed.

Use and upkeep of the apartment

In signing a lease, the landlord agrees to deliver a clean dwelling in good condition. As a tenant, you agree to maintain it in this condition. However, you are not responsible for changes in its condition due to normal use or aging. Throughout the lease period, neither the tenant nor the landlord may alter the structure of the apartment, for example by knocking down a wall to make a room bigger, without mutual consent to do so.

The landlord and tenant must comply with laws and regulations concerning the safety and cleanliness of the apartment. To maintain an apartment in good condition, you must among other things:

> take out the garbage and put it where indicated, usually on the sidewalk, on garbage collection days, and not let it accumulate inside the building;

> not keep animals in the apartment if it is prohibited by a municipal by-law, building regulation or the lease;

> maintain and regularly clean the sanitary facilities (sinks, toilet, shower and bathtub) and appliances (refrigerator, stove, washer and dryer) included with the apartment;

> not use the apartment for purposes other than that for which it was rented, namely, to live there;

> not allow an excessive number of persons to live there, given Québec standards of comfort and public health or municipal by-laws.

The tenant must also take care to not disturb the normal enjoyment of the premises by other occupants of the building.

Buying property

If finding the right apartment to rent necessitates careful consideration, buying a house requires even more care, given its more permanent nature. You will notice that some owners sell their houses themselves, but most real estate transactions are carried out through a real estate broker. After choosing the house you want to buy, make the owner an offer to purchase. To be prudent, make the offer conditional on obtaining a mortgage or on having the building inspected by an expert. If the seller accepts your conditions, you have to follow through with your purchase offer. The transaction will be completed by signing a deed of sale before a notary.

If you buy a property to live in from a building contractor or real estate developer, that person must give you a preliminary contract containing information on the building and a clause that allows you to change your mind within 10 days of signing your purchase offer. Such cancellation may involve a penalty, which must be specified in the contract and may not exceed 0.5% of the selling price.

Co-ownership

You may wish to buy an apartment rather than a house. Divided co-ownership apartments, called "condominiums," are increasingly popular in Québec. Under this formula, a building is divided into exclusively owned areas (the apartments themselves) and common areas (yard, lobby, elevators, stairs, parking space, etc.) shared between all co-owners. The condominium corporation (called a "syndicate") administers the building and maintains the common areas.

A more economical path to property ownership could be the purchase of an undivided share in a multi-unit building. This means buying a fraction of a building without owning any portion exclusively. However, this kind of purchase involves forming a group of individuals to carry out the project or joining an existing group. This rather complex process usually requires expert advice. After having lived in Québec for some time, you may want to consider this option.

Useful information

By becoming a member of a cooperatively owned building, you can house yourself at a good price, since this is a form of collectively shared property. However, the Régie du logement cannot determine the rent for your apartment while you remain a member of the co-op.

Furnishing

When you immigrate to Québec, your personal and household effects are exempt from customs duties. However, certain conditions apply and shipping may be expensive. Moreover, it may be preferable to buy items such as electrical appliances here, so they will conform to Canadian standards. Once you move into your new home, you will need basic furniture. Since new furniture is expensive, you will do best to proceed gradually. Renting a furnished apartment constitutes an immediate and economical solution.

Useful information

You can buy furniture inexpensively by going to sales and consulting classified ads in newspapers. Second-hand furniture can be bought at garage sales (also called "yard sales") or from volunteer organizations. For more information, contact community organizations that help new immigrants.

Telephone

In Québec, several telecommunications companies provide residential phone service. To obtain telephone service, simply contact the customer service department of a company serving your municipality. Telephones and directories are also available from these companies. You will probably have to pay a deposit to connect the service, which generally takes a few days.

Telecommunications companies normally charge a monthly subscription fee that allows an unlimited number of local calls of any duration. They also offer monthly flat-rate plans for unlimited long-distance calls between certain hours. Do some research to find the plan that best suits your needs. Calling cards may also prove useful.

Useful information

- The front pages of your telephone directory explain what you need to know as a telephone subscriber (rates, use, etc.). They also give the addresses of service counters near your home.
- Telephone numbers beginning with 1-800, 1-888, 1-877 and 1-866 allow you to call long distance toll-free.

Insurance

Although you are not obliged to insure your furniture, apartment or house, you are strongly advised to do so. Otherwise, you could find yourself in a difficult situation if your belongings are lost in a fire or theft. Moreover, if you are responsible for a fire in the building where you live, you could be required to pay the cost of damage caused to the building and the belongings of other tenants. If you take out a mortgage loan, the lender will demand that the building be insured.

Private brokers and insurance companies offer a wide range of coverage against fire, theft and public liability. Before committing yourself, find out about the different formulas from insurers and your circle of friends and acquaintances. Premiums can vary greatly for the same coverage. However, it is possible to reduce premium costs by asking for a higher deductible.* Your home insurance policy covers you for public liability even outside your home.

Energy costs: gas, electricity, heating oil

These costs are generally paid by the tenant unless the lease states that the landlord will pay them. In each region, electricity and natural gas are each supplied by a single provider. To find out the monthly cost and become a customer, simply call the Customer Service department of the local electric power company (usually Hydro-Québec) or natural gas company (usually Gaz Métropolitain). There are many oil companies and independent distributors for heating oil. Take the time to select the company that offers the best price and a good maintenance program for the heating system.

Since energy costs vary substantially from one season to the next, most suppliers let you spread out your total bill over the year. These equal monthly payment plans have the advantage of sparing you high bills in the winter.

Although Québec law prohibits certain service interruptions in winter, failure to pay your bills on time could create problems for you.

The installation of electrical and gas heating equipment is governed by Québec legislation and municipal by-laws and must generally be done by professionals. Do not try to save money by doing this work yourself. If your system were to cause a disaster or damage, your insurer could refuse to compensate you.

Useful tips

- Before moving, give your new address to natural gas, electricity and heating oil suppliers so they do not bill you for costs you did not incur.
- Be very careful using auxiliary heating systems (wood or kerosene stoves, portable electric heaters, etc.). They can be extremely harmful to your health and constitute serious fire hazards.

* The portion of damages borne by the insured party in the claim settlement.

Preventing and fighting fires

You must take a few basic precautions to prevent fires, particularly in winter when heating systems are working at full capacity. If you are responsible for maintaining your heating system, have it checked and have your chimney cleaned by a competent firm at least once a year. Your local fire department can recommend such companies. Many fires are also caused by the unsafe use of stoves or by careless smokers. Be very careful when using cooking oils and never smoke in bed.

Most municipalities require rental-building owners to equip each apartment with a smoke detector. By warning you at the outbreak of a fire, these inexpensive devices can save your life and prevent extensive damage to you and your neighbours. Fire extinguishers are also strongly recommended and sometimes required by municipal by-law. Firefighting services are provided free of charge by municipalities.

If a fire breaks out

- Trigger the building's fire alarm system, if it has one.
- Notify the fire department immediately by calling 9-1-1.

Consult your municipal fire department for further information on fire prevention and what to do in case of a fire.

The Québec health system

Québec Health Insurance Plan

Medical care and hospitalization are provided throughout Québec. These services are covered by a universal health insurance plan administered by the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) and the Québec Hospitalization Insurance Plan. All Québec residents* are eligible for the Health Insurance Plan. They must obtain a Health Insurance Card by registering with the RAMQ.

This plan covers all necessary medical care, but not special treatments such as cosmetic surgery or so-called natural or alternative medical treatment. Before consulting a doctor or other health specialist, make sure that he or she practices under the Québec Health Insurance Plan. Otherwise, you will have to pay for the visit yourself.

* Within the meaning of the *Health Insurance Act*.

Eligibility for the plan

Health care and hospitalization are covered for everyone who lives in Québec at least 183 days a year, has a Health Insurance Card, and has completed any applicable waiting period. The waiting period is a maximum period of three months during which new arrivals who come to settle in Québec are not covered by the Health Insurance Plan. However, as an exception, medical, pharmaceutical and hospital care related to pregnancy or required by women who are victims of violence, is provided free of charge during this waiting period.

Immigrants from countries that have a reciprocity agreement on social security with Québec are generally exempt from this waiting period. In this case, proof of insurance from the social security plan of the country of origin will be required when registering with the RAMQ. Countries that have reached such an agreement with Québec are Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal and Sweden.

The Québec Health Insurance Card

This card, which bears the photograph and signature of the holder, entitles the holder to receive health care services covered by the Health Insurance Plan. Children under 14 years of age do not have a photo or signature on their card.

Transport by ambulance

Unless you have private insurance covering ambulance service, you must usually pay for it. You will be billed in the days following the trip. However, ambulance transport is generally free for victims of road or workplace accidents, persons already hospitalized who must change health establishment, employment assistance recipients, and persons aged 65 and over.

In an emergency

Dial 9-1-1 or call your nearest police station directly. Keep the numbers near your telephone.

Visiting a doctor

You must clearly describe your symptoms to the doctor for a correct diagnosis. In turn, the doctor must give you a clear description of your state of health, the treatment recommended and the drugs prescribed. Do not hesitate to ask questions.

Public Prescription Drug Insurance Plan

The public Prescription Drug Insurance Plan guarantees all Québec residents* access to medication required by their state of health. Premiums payable to the plan take into account an individual's financial situation. The plan is administered by the RAMQ and covers residents of Québec who do not have access to a group insurance plan.

To register, call the RAMQ and have your Health Insurance Number at hand. Persons aged 65 years and over are automatically registered. They must notify the RAMQ if they wish to have their prescription drug purchases covered by their group insurance plan, where applicable.

Dental care and oral surgery

To obtain dental care, make an appointment with one of the many dentists in private practice. Only children under 10 years of age and, in certain cases, employment assistance recipients, may receive most treatments free of charge upon presentation of their Health Insurance Card. Unlike health care, dental care is not free for other types of clients.

Certain oral surgical procedures performed in facilities operated by a hospital or university are free for all Québec residents* covered by the Québec Health Insurance Plan.

Useful information

You can receive dental care at a reduced price by going to a university clinic. However, because these clinics are very busy, you can rarely obtain an appointment on short notice.

* Within the meaning of the *Health Insurance Act*.

Emergency care

If you or someone close to you needs immediate medical care, go to the nearest hospital emergency clinic. However, if you cannot move the person, call 9-1-1 for emergency medical service. The telephone directory front pages give the phone numbers of other emergency services such as help to sexual assault victims, young people and suicidal or depressed persons, gas odour detection, poison control, etc.

Useful tips

- Make sure you understand how each prescription drug should be taken. The pharmacist can advise you.
- Do not stay alone in an emergency situation. Call friends or neighbours that you know. They can help you, look after your children in your absence, or accompany you to the hospital.

The family

Registration of a birth

The birth of every child in Québec must be declared to the Directeur de l'état civil (Registrar of Civil Status), who will enter the birth in the register of civil status of Québec. Once registered, the child will be able to:

> establish his or her identity;

> obtain a Health Insurance Card and Social Insurance Number;

> obtain a birth certificate and other civil status documents.

The parents* must declare the birth of their child within 30 days following the birth.

Two documents are required to enter a birth in the register of civil status:

> the Attestation of birth, completed and signed by the person who assisted the delivery;

> the Declaration of birth, completed and signed by the child's parents before a witness.

If the parents are not married to one another, they must both sign the Declaration of birth to establish their maternal and paternal parentage.

To register your child, you can take the Declaration of birth to the Registrar of Civil Status yourself. The Attestation of birth will then be sent to the Registrar directly by the doctor. However, we recommend that you leave the Declaration of birth with hospital staff, who will send it along with the Attestation of birth to the Registrar of Civil Status within the deadline prescribed by law.

After entering the child's birth in the register of civil status, the Registrar of Civil Status will confirm the registration by letter. Once the child is entered in the register of civil status by the prescribed deadline, and the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec has verified the child's eligibility, the parents will automatically receive the child's Health Insurance Card.

* Unless otherwise indicated, the word *parents* includes same-sex and opposite-sex couples to reflect changes to the *Act instituting civil unions and establishing new rules of filiation*.

The Québec day care network

Resources	Age group	Number of children accepted	Attendance	Maximum length of stay	Characteristics
Centres de la petite enfance (CPE) (childcare centres)	From birth to age 5; sometimes school-age children	Minimum of 7	Variable, full time or part time	48 consecutive hours	Educational program*
Home day care	From birth to age 12	Maximum of 9	Variable, full time or part time	Possibility of more than 24 consecutive hours	Educational program*
Day care centres	From birth to age 12	Minimum of 7	Variable, full time or part time	24 consecutive hours	Educational program*
Kindergarten**	From age 2 to age 5	Stable groups of minimum of 7	Morning or afternoon, on a regular basis	Maximum 4 hourss	Educational program*
Drop-in day care centres**	From birth to age 12	Minimum of 7	Variable, occasional use	24 consecutive hours	Educational activities optional

All these services are provided in spaces designed for this purpose, except home care services, which are offered in private residences. The Centres de la petite enfance coordinate and monitor home day care services.

* Program adapted to the child's age and amount of time spent there, with the goal of promoting overall development.
** These services are not currently regulated by law.

Leaves and absences for family reasons

The *Act respecting Labour Standards* grants employees a number of days of paid and unpaid leave for family-related events.

Maternity leave

An employed pregnant woman may take maternity leave with the assurance of returning to her job with no reduction of benefits. This unpaid maternity leave lasts several consecutive weeks. Ask your employer or union about the conditions for obtaining it. The Commission des normes du travail can tell you the minimum conditions determined by law concerning the right to maternity leave. Under certain conditions, you may receive maternity benefits or allowances during this period. For more information on leaves to which you are entitled, contact Québec local employment centres or Human Resources Canada centres.

Parental leave

Other leave days are granted to an employed person at the birth or adoption of his or her child or to fulfill obligations related to the care, health or education of the child. An unpaid leave of up to 52 consecutive weeks may also be granted to parents of a newborn child or to a person who adopts a minor child.

Absence for family reasons

The law also allows employees to take days off for their own marriage or that of a family member, when a family member dies or when their presence is required by a family member because of an accident or serious illness. To learn more about paid or unpaid leaves to which you may be entitled, contact the Commission des normes du travail or your union.

Useful information

- If you are pregnant and your job or work environment presents dangers to your health or that of your unborn child, you can ask your employer for a transfer or take precautionary pregnancy leave. Ask the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST) about this option.
- If you are pregnant, your CSSS* can provide a great deal of support throughout your pregnancy and after you give birth (medical help, nursing care, pre-natal classes). It can also advise you on family planning at any time.

* Also known under the former abbreviation CLSC.

Child social services

Under the *Civil Code of Québec* and other legislation, Québec society does not regard children as the "property" of their parents, but rather as persons in their own right. Society wants them to receive a good education. It also wants them protected in many respects, particularly, by a vaccination from certain childhood diseases. Likewise, it wants to shelter them from physical, psychological and sexual abuse. If you know of any children you believe are being abused, mistreated or neglected, contact the youth protection center in your region and ask to report the situation to the Directeur de la protection de la jeunesse (DPJ).

Domestic violence

Although Québec society disapproves of violence against any person, women and men are still victims of assault or domestic violence, and children are victims of family violence. The law encourages you to not tolerate such situations.

You will not lose any of your rights if you leave the family home to escape mistreatment. On the contrary, you and your children are protected by law from such abuse, which is considered a serious crime. You should therefore not be afraid to call the police. They will protect you and, in collaboration with social services, refer you to a shelter if necessary.

In an emergency, call the police immediately by dialing 9-1-1.

Useful information

- Many organizations can give you information, advice and comfort. Some offer free telephone crisis lines open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Your nearest police station or CSSS can tell you about the best resources to meet your needs.
- A list of these organizations is available from a Centre d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels – CAVAC (Crime Victims Assistance Centre).

Marriage

You must be at least 16 years old to marry in Québec. However, anyone under age 18 must have the consent of their parents or guardians. The procedures for getting married are simple. The future spouses may opt for:

- a religious marriage performed by a minister of religion authorized by the Minister responsible for civil status;
- a civil marriage performed by a notary or any other person designated by the Minister of Justice.

In either case, the officiating parties must be authorized to perform weddings by the Ministère de la Justice. Both religious and civil marriages have the same value and spouses are subject to the same commitments and responsibilities. In either case, the law provides that:

- both spouses are fully equal;
- a joint family patrimony is established, including homes, furniture, automobiles used for family travel, and some private retirement plans;
- they jointly choose the family home;
- each spouse contributes to household expenses;
- they are jointly responsible for debts contracted for current household needs.

In Québec, only a divorce granted by a civil court can legally terminate a marriage. When spouses divorce, they must divide the family patrimony equally. The repudiation of one spouse by the other has no legal effect. Polygamy is illegal.

Matrimonial regimes

The law gives a choice among three matrimonial regimes – partnership of acquests, separation as to property and community of property.

With the exception of the partnership of acquests, which applies automatically to couples without a marriage contract, the other regimes involve signing a contract before a notary. The regime selected will come into effect when the marriage is celebrated. However, the matrimonial regime or marriage contract can always be changed. Both spouses must consent and obtain the services of a notary. In this case, the new matrimonial regime comes into effect when the contract is signed.

Civil union

Two persons of the same or opposite sex may contract a civil union before an officer authorized to perform marriages. A civil union has essentially the same effects as a marriage.

Common-law marriages

Two persons may also decide to live in a common law relationship ("free union"), meaning they live together without getting married. Common-law relationships are recognized regardless of the sex of the spouses.

The *Civil Code of Québec* confers no particular status on common-law spouses. If they sign a co-habitation agreement, preferably before a notary or lawyer, common-law spouses may obtain certain guarantees offered by marriage. This legal document sets out the conditions that they agree to obey. Children born of this type of union are protected by law and enjoy the same rights as children of a married couple. In the event of death, surviving common-law spouses are not legally recognized as heirs. Therefore, common-law spouses who wish to bequeath belongings to one another should do so through a notarized will. Similarly, the surviving common-law spouse may receive life insurance proceeds on the deceased spouse only if he or she was named a beneficiary.

Elderly persons

Most elderly persons who immigrate do so to join a son or daughter. They often feel uprooted, therefore most of them appreciate meeting fellow-countrymen in a community setting. Whether or not they are immigrants, elderly persons sometimes need special care and attention because of their state of health or the loss of financial or physical autonomy. A CSSS is the gateway to a number of services, such as home support, intended for the elderly. They may also receive financial benefits:

- certain services are free or at reduced rates;
- government pension and retirement plans or benefits, under certain conditions.

In various ways, the Régie des rentes du Québec and the income security programs of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada help ensure a decent minimum income to the elderly or retired persons. If you or your spouse paid into a pension plan in a country that has signed a social security agreement with Québec, you may be entitled to a retirement, disability, survivor or orphan's pension from that country. Find out about this from the Régie des rentes du Québec.

Useful tip

Ask organizations from your community of origin about organized activities for the elderly. Visit your nearest CSSS to learn about services available to seniors.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENTS

- **Régie des rentes du Québec:** www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca

INFORMATION ON REGISTERING A BIRTH AND ON ACTS OF CIVIL STATUS

- **Directeur de l'état civil:** www.etatcivil.gouv.qc.ca

INFORMATION ON THE RIGHTS AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR REGIONAL OFFICES

- **Conseil du statut de la femme:** www.csf.gouv.qc.ca

INFORMATION ON THE QUÉBEC CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS (INCLUDING QUESTIONS CONCERNING DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND THE EXPLOITATION OF ELDERLY OR DISABLED PERSONS) AND ON THE DIRECTEUR DE LA PROTECTION DE LA JEUNESSE (DPJ)

- **Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse:** www.cdpdj.qc.ca

INFORMATION ON AID SERVICES OR HOW TO CONTACT A CRIME VICTIMS ASSISTANCE CENTRE (CAVAC)

- **Compensation for victims of criminal acts:** www.ivac.qc.ca

In an emergency, you can also call the following crisis lines directly. They are free of charge and operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- **Parents Line**
  - > Montreal region: (514) 288-5555
  - > elsewhere in Québec (toll-free): 1 800 361-5085
- **Spousal Abuse**
  - > everywhere in Québec (toll-free): 1 800 363-9010
- **Youth Line**
  - > Montreal region: (514) 288-2266
  - > elsewhere in Québec (toll-free): 1 800 263-2266

The Québec education system

Education is free in the public system for all Québec residents from kindergarten to the college level inclusively*. The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) also recognizes a network of private establishments that also teach the official school curriculum. To attend these private schools, students must pay tuition fees and meet their individual entrance requirements. School attendance is compulsory for all children from ages 6 to 16. The school year begins in late August or early September and usually ends before June 24th. It lasts at least 180 days.

Preschool education

Preschool education (kindergarten) prepares children for primary school. They receive supervision that promotes their development, introduces them gradually to a stimulating learning environment and teaches them the skills they need to succeed in school. Although kindergarten is not compulsory, 98% of eligible children are enrolled in it. Preschool education is provided:

- to children aged four, half time, in some schools;
- to children aged five, full time, during the school year;
- throughout Québec, in the public school system and some private schools.

Primary education**

Regardless of whether they attended kindergarten, all six-year-old children must be enrolled in primary school. Children aged five can be enrolled provided they turn six before October 1 of their first full year. Pupils with adjustment problems can benefit from services that take their learning difficulties into account.

Useful information

The Québec school system encourages parents to participate actively in their children's education by becoming involved in the school's governing board and parent participation organization and, at the school board level, parents' committees, the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with maladjustments or learning disabilities, and the advisory committee on transportation.

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* Within the meaning of the *Education Act*, the *General and Vocational Colleges Act* and their regulations.

** Regulatory amendments to legislation and regulations respecting primary and secondary school education are currently under consideration. For information, visit the website of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport: www.mels.gouv.qc.ca.

Secondary education*

After six years of primary education, students must continue their education at the secondary level in:

> a general program, lasting five years, that awards a *Diplôme d'études secondaires – DES* (high school leaving diploma) and leads to higher education; or

> a vocational program that leads to the practice of skilled and semi-skilled trades and awards either a *Diplôme d'études professionnelles – DEP* (vocational studies diploma) or an *Attestation de formation professionnelle – AFP* (vocational training certificate). Access to these programs requires three to five years of general secondary education. Vocational studies last from one to two years, depending on the program.

Important

Under the *Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, everyone must have equal access, without discrimination, to services ordinarily offered to the public. As such, a child may not be excluded from ordinary school solely because he or she suffers from behavioural problems or a disability. If this happens, an appeal may be filed with the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, which can take action in matters of integrating pupils into ordinary classes.

College education

A general secondary education leads to college, which is the first stage of higher education. General and vocational colleges known as CEGEPs (collège d'enseignement général et professionnel) and certain private colleges offer students a choice between:

> pre-university studies, lasting two years, that prepare students for university;

> technical studies, lasting three years, that lead to jobs as technicians or technologists. In certain circumstances, technical studies can also lead to university.

Whatever their choice, students must take general education courses, some of which are common to both programs. The *Diplôme d'études collégiales – DEC* (college diploma) recognizes the education acquired in pre-university and technical studies programs.

CEGEPs offer a wide variety of pre-university programs including natural sciences, social sciences, dance, music, fine arts, liberal arts, science, history and civilization. Some CEGEPs also offer an international baccalaureate. The numerous technical programs are divided into five fields: biological technology, physics technology, social technology, administrative technology and arts. In fact, they cover all sectors of the economy. Specialized educational

* Regulatory amendments to legislation and regulations respecting primary and secondary education are currently under consideration. For information, visit the website of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport: www.mels.gouv.qc.ca.

institutions such as institutes and conservatories also offer diverse training programs in disciplines such as circus training, music, agri-food technology, tourism and hotel industry, fashion design, horticulture, etc.

University education

University education represents the second stage of higher education. The duration of study varies depending on the discipline and level. First-level (undergraduate) university studies result in either a Bachelor's degree (three to five years of study) or a certificate or diploma (one or two years of study). At the second (graduate) level, studies lead to either a Master's degree (generally two years of study) or a certificate or diploma (generally one year of study). Study at the third (doctoral) level leads to a Ph.D. after three years or more. As independent entities, universities determine their own courses of study, teaching and research programs, entrance and registration requirements, and grant their own degrees. Québec's various universities, higher learning centres and research institutes are concentrated in Montréal, Québec City and Sherbrooke. However, university education is also available in most regions through the Université du Québec network with campuses located in Rouyn-Noranda, Saguenay, Gatineau, Montréal, Rimouski and Trois-Rivières.

Useful information

Québec educational institutions have the sole authority to assess academic equivalences for purposes of admitting an applicant to their programs after examining the applicant's academic record.

School boards

School boards are in charge of public schools from preschool to secondary levels, as well as vocational and adult education centres.

The boards are administered by councils of commissioners elected by universal suffrage for a four-year term and by parent representatives who are elected for one year. They are responsible for organizing and providing quality education services that effectively meet the educational needs of young people, adults and local organizations, particularly businesses. They must also adapt educational services to meet the needs of students with disabilities or adjustment and learning difficulties.

School boards determine which educational services are offered by each school, vocational centre and adult education centre. They provide day care services for preschool and primary school pupils and can organize school transportation, meals and accommodation to make educational services more easily accessible. The majority of school boards are francophone and some are anglophone.

Admission and registration

Since French is the official language of Québec, the children of immigrants,

whatever their mother tongue, are normally required to attend a school under a francophone school board in their area until completion of their secondary studies.

Preschool, primary and secondary school

In order for your child to attend school, you must first apply for admission to the school board in your locality. Depending on the situation, either the parents or the school board will register the child. The school board may, where applicable, send you the necessary registration documents together with contact information for the school. Each year, all school boards issue a public notice concerning admission applications. The admission period starts in February or March to be ready for the return to school some months later, usually in late August. Although you can apply for admission at any time, it is generally recommended that you register your child for preschool (kindergarten) before the end of June.

College and university

To apply for admission to a CEGEP, contact the institution you wish to attend. If it belongs to a regional admission service, you will be referred there. For the fall term (beginning at the end of August), applications must be handed in before March 1. For the winter term (beginning in January), the deadline is November 1. Colleges may charge an admission fee. As for universities, you must send your application and the required fee to the institution you wish to attend. Deadlines vary by institution and education program.

Useful tip

Do not hesitate to seek advice from officials at your child's school when the time comes to choose his or her course of study at the high school or college level. Even though your child can change direction at a later date, an unfortunate first choice can limit future vocational or educational options.

School governing board

Each school, vocational training centre and adult education centre has a governing board. Composed of an equal number of parents and school employees, it has a decision-making role in several areas:

- development, implementation and evaluation of the school's educational role;
- methods of implementing legislation and regulations respecting education and student support policies;
- time allotted to each school subject.

This governing board also determines the policies, action plans and periodic evaluations of vocational and adult education centres.

Employment

The labour market

Here are some characteristics of the Québec labour market:

- The minimum education requirement for most jobs is 11 years of schooling, which corresponds to a secondary or high school diploma (DES).
- Written and spoken knowledge of French and English will greatly influence your chances of professional advancement.
- A good knowledge of the written language is highly valued throughout the professional job market.
- Québec offers good opportunities for self-employment.
- The Québec labour market offers jobs on a full-time, part-time, temporary or contractual basis.
- Most workers are hired by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- It may be easier to obtain an interview with potential employers outside the summer vacation period.

Women at work

An immigrant woman settling in Québec enjoys the same rights and responsibilities as any other Québec woman. These days, most women have a job and combine family life and work. Women in Québec enjoy the same rights as men and are independent and responsible. They can work in any trade or profession they choose. Therefore, an employer who refuses to hire a woman for a job for which she is qualified, solely because she is a woman, commits an offence punishable by legal prosecution and penalties.

Despite these equal rights, women have long been confined to jobs traditionally held by women, which are generally underpaid. To redress these injustices inherited from the past, the government, para-public organizations and many employers have set up access to equality programs. Québec also passed a *Pay Equity Act*. Under this legislation, a female worker must receive the same pay as a male worker when their jobs, although different, have the same or equivalent value within the company.

Useful tip

If an employer refuses you a job because you are a woman, contact the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse.

Adult or continuing education

Adult education centres, which fall under the school boards, offer literacy programs, pre-secondary studies and general and vocational education. Colleges and universities also offer adult education programs.

Before admitting you into a general, vocational or technical education program, school boards and colleges must make sure that your studies done outside Québec meet the minimum entrance requirements for your program. For this purpose, they may ask you to provide an *Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec* (comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec). Page 68 of your guide has a section on the *Évaluation Comparative*. The school board or college can also tell you how to secure recognition for knowledge and skills acquired outside an educational institution.

To learn more

INFORMATION ON THE RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN ADULT GENERAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

- **Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport:** www.mels.gouv.qc.ca

Minimum working conditions

Before you accept a job offer, have the employer give you a description as precise as possible of working conditions such as salary, working hours, supervision, duration and status of the position (permanent or temporary) and vacation. In most cases, you will not have to sign a contract. The *Act respecting Labour Standards* establishes the minimum working conditions in Québec, including:

- minimum hourly wage;
- 50% markup over the ordinary hourly wage for hours worked in addition to the normal work week;
- vacations, statutory holidays, paid non-working days, absence and leave for family or parental reasons;
- the rules that employers must follow in the event of termination of employment, dismissal, etc.

Salary

Wages are generally paid weekly or every two weeks. No benefit having a monetary value (car, housing, transportation, etc.) should result in an employee receiving less than the minimum wage. The rate of minimum wage, whether it is paid as a regular salary, or it involves tips, commissions or is paid on a piecework basis is set by the Québec government and is subject to change. Its application is supervised by the Commission des normes du travail.

Unions

In Québec, like everywhere else, unions are entities that organize workers to defend their interests with their employers. Through negotiations with employers, they establish common working conditions that are stipulated in a contract called a "collective agreement." About 40% of workers in Québec are union members.

Québec law recognizes the right of all workers to belong to a union. If there is a union in the company where you find work, you can choose whether or not you wish to join. However, the Québec labour code requires your employer to deduct union dues from your wages regardless of whether you are a union member.

Useful information

When an employee association is recognized by your employer, your working conditions could be governed by a collective agreement. For details, ask your union representative.

Workplace health and safety

Under certain conditions, victims of industrial accidents or occupational illness are entitled to receive income replacement benefits, compensation for bodily injury, and physical, social and occupational rehabilitation services. This public program to protect workers is administered by the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST).

Employment Insurance

People who lose their jobs may, under certain conditions, be eligible for the Employment Insurance Plan and have a right to receive benefits. All employers and employees must contribute to this public insurance program. When you receive employment insurance benefits, you are paid a percentage of your salary for a limited time and must prove that you are looking for work.

If you are unemployed, you must take all relevant papers, including the record of employment that must be given to you by your last employer to a Human Resources Canada Centre.

Income security

If, inspite of your efforts, you cannot find a job and have no income, you can turn to income security (employment assistance) as a last resort. You can apply for this form of financial assistance at the local employment centre nearest you.

However, if you were admitted to Québec as a sponsored immigrant, you must first approach your sponsor, who is committed by contract to provide for your essential needs and those of family members accompanying you (housing, food, clothing and personal necessities).

If you were selected as a worker, a self-employed worker or an entrepreneur, you made a commitment to have sufficient funds to meet your needs and those of accompanying family members for your first three months in Québec. Accordingly, you and your accompanying family members are not eligible for last-resort financial assistance during the first three months following your arrival in Québec as a permanent resident.

To learn more

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY, INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS, OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESSES, PREVENTATIVE WITHDRAWAL FROM WORK

- **Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail:** www.csst.qc.ca

INFORMATION ON THE QUÉBEC CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS (INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATED TO DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, ETC.) AND ON ACCESS TO EQUALITY PROGRAMS

- **Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse:** www.cdpdj.qc.ca

INFORMATION ON PAY EQUITY

- **Commission de l'équité salariale:** www.ces.gouv.qc.ca

List of main regulated trades and professions in Québec

Professions governed by professional orders

- Acupuncturist
- Advocate
- Agrologist
- Architect
- Audiologist
- Bailiff
- Certified General Accountant
- Certified Human Resources Professional
- Certified Industrial Relations Counsellor
- Certified Interpreter
- Certified Management Accountant
- Certified Terminologist
- Certified Translator
- Chartered Accountant
- Chartered Administrator
- Chartered Appraiser
- Chemist
- Chiropractor
- Dental Hygienist
- Dental Technician
- Dentist
- Denturologist
- Dietician
- Dispensing Optician
- Engineer
- Forest Engineer
- Geologist
- Guidance Counsellor
- Hearing-Aid Acoustician
- Land-Surveyor
- Marital and Family Therapist
- Medical Technologist
- Midwife
- Notary
- Nurse
- Nursing Assistant
- Occupational Therapist
- Optometrist
- Pharmacist
- Podiatrist
- Professional Technologist
- Physical Rehabilitation Therapist
- Physician
- Physiotherapist
- Psychoeducator
- Psychologist
- Radiology Technologist
- Respiratory Therapist
- Speech Therapist
- Social Worker
- Town Planner
- Veterinary Surgeon

Regulated trades in the construction industry

- Boilermaker
- Bricklayer - Mason
- Building Locksmith
- Carpenter-Joiner (specialty: parqueting-sanding)
- Cement Finisher
- Crane Operator
- Electrician (specialty: security system installation)
- Elevator Mechanic
- Fire Protection Mechanic
- Heavy Equipment Mechanic
- Heavy Equipment Operator (specialty: pavers, levellers, rollers and tractors)
- Installer Mechanic (glazier)
- Insulator
- Interior Systems Installer
- Iron Worker
- Mechanical Shovel Operator
- Millwright
- Painter
- Pipe Fitter (specialty: plumbing and heating installation)
- Plasterer
- Refrigeration Mechanic
- Resilient Flooring Layer
- Roofer
- Structural Steel Erector
- Tile Setter
- Tinsmith

Regulated trades outside the construction industry

- Electrician
- Electrical Machine Operator (categories: operator of cranes, shovels, winches, overhead traveling cranes, derricks, cinematography devices, machines for thawing pipes)
- Elevator Mechanic
- Pipe Fitter (specialty: plumbing, sprinkler and heating installation, refrigeration mechanic)

Other regulated trades

- Gas Worker
- High Pressure Welder
- Inspector of Pressure Devices
- Stationary Engineman

Regulated disciplines in the financial sector

- Claims adjustment
- Damage Insurance
- Financial Planning
- Group Insurance of persons
- Group Savings Plan Brokerage
- Insurance of persons
- Investment Contract Brokerage
- Scholarship Plan Brokerage

Note: Depending on the discipline, a person may act as an adjuster, an advisor, an agent, a broker or a representative.

Contact information for Immigration-Québec Services

Information on services to immigrants

The MICC provides a general information service by telephone or in person. It can give you the information you need or refer you to appropriate resources in either public services or community organizations that help new immigrants.

For the Montreal region:
(514) 864-9191

Toll free in other regions:
1 877 864-9191

Access by TTY device
(Telecommunication device for the deaf or hearing-impaired)

For the Montréal region:
(514) 864-8158

Toll free in other regions:
1 866 227-5968

In Montréal

- **Immigration-Québec – Est de Montréal**
  8000, boulevard Langelier, bureau 602
  Saint-Léonard (Québec) H1P 3K2
  Telephone: (514) 864-9191
  Renseignements@micc.gouv.qc.ca
- **Immigration-Québec – Ouest de Montréal**
  181, boulevard Hymus, bureau 204
  Pointe-Claire (Québec) H9R 5P4
  Telephone: (514) 864-9191
  Renseignements@micc.gouv.qc.ca
- **Immigration-Québec – Nord de Montréal**
  255, boulevard Crémazie Est, 8e étage, bureau 8.01
  Montréal (Québec) H2M 1M2
  Telephone: (514) 864-9191
  Renseignements@micc.gouv.qc.ca
- **Immigration-Québec – Sud de Montréal**
  800, boulevard De Maisonneuve Est, rez-de-chaussée
  Montréal (Québec) H2L 4L8
  Telephone: (514) 864-9191
  Renseignements@micc.gouv.qc.ca

Outside Montréal

- **Immigration-Québec – Capitale-Nationale et Est-du-Québec**
  Édifice Bois-Fontaine
  930, chemin Sainte-Foy, rez-de-chaussée
  Québec (Québec) G1S 2L4
  Information and customer service
  Telephone: (418) 643-1435
  or 1 888 643-1435
  Fax: (418) 646-0783
  direction.quebec@micc.gouv.qc.ca
- **Immigration-Québec – Capitale-Nationale et Est-du-Québec**
  Bureau de Saguenay
  3885, boulevard Harvey, bureau 206
  Jonquière (Québec) G7X 9B1
  Telephone: (418) 695-8144
  Fax: (418) 695-8162

- **Immigration-Québec – Estrie, Mauricie et Centre-du-Québec**
  202, rue Wellington Nord
  Sherbrooke (Québec) J1H 5C6
  Information and customer service
  Telephone: (819) 820-3606
  or 1 888 879-4288
  Fax: (819) 820-3213
  direction.estrie@micc.gouv.qc.ca
- **Immigration-Québec – Estrie, Mauricie et Centre-du-Québec**
  Bureau de Trois-Rivières
  100, rue Laviolette, rez-de-chaussée 26
  Trois-Rivières (Québec) G9A 5S9
  Information and customer service
  Telephone: (819) 371-6011
  or 1 888 879-4294
  Fax: (819) 371-6120
  bureau.trois-riv@micc.gouv.qc.ca
- **Immigration-Québec – Outaouais, Abitibi-Témiscamingue et Nord-du-Québec**
  430, boulevard de l'Hôpital, 3e étage
  Gatineau (Québec) J8V 1T7
  Information and customer service
  Telephone: (819) 246-3345
  or 1 888 295-9095
  Fax: (819) 246-3314
  direction.outaouais@micc.gouv.qc.ca
- **Immigration-Québec – Laval, Laurentides et Lanaudière**
  705, chemin du Trait-Carré, rez-de-chaussée
  Laval (Québec) H7N 1B3
  Information and customer service
  Telephone: (450) 972-3225
  or 1 800 375-7426
  Fax: (450) 972-3250
  direction.drlll@micc.gouv.qc.ca
- **Immigration-Québec – Montérégie**
  2, boulevard Desaulniers, 3e étage
  Saint-Lambert (Québec) J4P 1L2
  Information and customer service
  Telephone: (450) 466-4461
  or 1 888 287-5819
  Fax: (450) 466-4481
  direction.monteregie@micc.gouv.qc.ca

Information on Québec government programs and services

Contact Services Québec if you cannot find the government agency you want or if you need information on Québec government laws, programs and services (conditions of eligibility, opening hours, etc.). Its free telephone service is available in all regions across Québec.

- **Services Québec**
  Anywhere in Québec:
  1 800 363-1363 (toll-free)

List of main websites

- Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association Inc.: www.accap.ca
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada: www.cic.gc.ca
- Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse: www.cdpdj.qc.ca
- Commission des normes du travail: www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca
- Conseil du statut de la femme: www.csf.gouv.qc.ca
- Emploi-Québec: emploiquebec.net
- Government of Québec: www.gouv.qc.ca
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada: www.hrsdc.gc.ca
- Ministère de la Famille, des Aînés et de la Condition féminine: www.mfacf.gouv.qc.ca
- Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux: www.msss.gouv.qc.ca
- Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport: www.mels.gouv.qc.ca
- Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale: www.mess.gouv.qc.ca
- Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles: www.micc.gouv.qc.ca www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca
- Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions: www.mamr.gouv.qc.ca
- Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation: www.mdeie.gouv.qc.ca
- Ministère du Travail: www.travail.gouv.qc.ca
- Office de la protection du consommateur: www.opc.gouv.qc.ca
- Option consommateurs: www.option-consommateurs.org
- Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec: www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca
- Régie des rentes du Québec: www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca
- Régie du logement du Québec: www.rdl.gouv.qc.ca
- Services Québec: www.servicesquebec.gouv.qc.ca
- Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec: www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca

E-mail addresses for information on Québec's regions

Choisir.abitibi-temiscamingue@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.bas-saint-laurent@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.centre-du-quebec@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.chaudiere-appalaches@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.cote-nord@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.estrie@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.gaspesie-iles-de-la-madeleine@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.lanaudiere@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.laurentides@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.laval@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.mauricie@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.monteregie@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.montreal@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.nord-du-quebec@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.outaouais@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.quebeclacapitale-nationale@micc.gouv.qc.ca
Choisir.saguenay-lac-saint-jean@micc.gouv.qc.ca

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